United Nations A/62/200

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session

List of supplementary items proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly*

1. Observer status for the Energy Charter Conference in the General Assembly [item proposed by Japan (A/62/191)].

2. Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur [item proposed by the Secretary-General (A/62/192)].

3. Urging the Security Council to process Taiwan's membership application pursuant to rules 59 and 60 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council and Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations [item proposed by Belize, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, the Gambia, Honduras, Kiribati, Malawi, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Swaziland and Tuvalu (A/62/193 and Add.1 and 2)].

4. Observer status for the Eurasian Development Bank in the General Assembly [item proposed by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (A/62/194)].

* Issued in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

07-49359 (E) 040907

United Nations A/62/200*

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 September 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

** Issued in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

07-49359* (E) 120907

United Nations A/62/200**

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session

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** Second reissue for technical reasons.
*** Issued in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

07-49359** (E) 180907

United Nations A/62/201

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Item 65 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Advancement of women

Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/62/150.

07-45023 (E) 280807

I. Introduction

1. Following the launch of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1), the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/143 of 19 December 2006 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an annual report on the implementation of the resolution, and requested that the report include, at its sixty-second session, information provided by the United Nations bodies, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies on their follow-up activities to implement the resolution; and at the sixty-third session of the Assembly, information provided by States on their follow-up activities to implement the resolution.

2. In paragraph 12 of the resolution, the General Assembly urged the entities of the United Nations system, inter alia, to support the strengthening of national capacities and efforts on the collection, processing and dissemination of data for their possible use in the national plans of action against all forms of violence against women. In paragraph 13 (a), the Assembly urged those entities to enhance the coordination of and intensify their efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in a more systematic, comprehensive and sustained way. Paragraph 14 of the resolution called upon the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women as a system-wide funding mechanism. The Assembly stressed, in paragraph 16, that within the United Nations system adequate resources should be assigned to those bodies responsible for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights. Paragraph 19 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to establish a coordinated database, containing data provided by States, disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant information, on the extent, nature and consequences of all forms of violence against women, and on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes for, including best practices in, combating such violence.

3. The present report summarizes the efforts of entities of the United Nations system to (a) achieve greater coordination and collaboration in their work on violence against women; (b) disseminate the in-depth study of the Secretary-General and resolution 61/143; and (c) undertake initiatives in respect of violence against women in support of national efforts. The report is based on information provided by 33 entities of the United Nations system and by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for an inventory of current and future activities of the United Nations system on violence against women (see annex for list of contributors). The inventory, compiled by the Division for the Advancement of Women, is available on its website.

4. Follow-up to the study and the resolution has proceeded at the level of individual entities, where the momentum generated by the preparatory process is being used to initiate new activities or strengthen ongoing work. The inventory, which will be regularly updated, now serves as a baseline for assessing progress in implementation. Entity-specific activities are complemented by collaborative efforts, coordinated in particular by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Given the short period of time since the adoption of the resolution, some of the new and intensified efforts of collaboration and coordination are still at a preliminary stage but will increase in future programming cycles.

II. United Nations efforts aimed at achieving greater coordination and collaboration

5. The Secretary-General decided to spearhead a multi-year system-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls through 2015, coinciding with the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, in which all United Nations system entities should participate from their respective areas of comparative advantage. The campaign would be developed by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, in collaboration with United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, and guided by the Deputy Secretary-General. The launch of the campaign, which is expected at the end of 2007, will include practical high-impact activities for 2008 to respond to the urgency of the issue. The campaign will focus on three key areas: global advocacy; United Nations leadership by example; and strengthened efforts and partnerships at the national and regional levels to effectively support the efforts of Governments, civil society and other actors in implementing comprehensive approaches to preventing and addressing all forms of violence against women and girls.

6. To give further impetus to the work of the United Nations system on violence against women and girls, and in particular stronger follow-up to the in-depth study and resolution 61/143, the Secretary-General will promote the strengthening of capacity within the United Nations Secretariat and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, and intensify efforts to mobilize resources for that work. The topic will be considered by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2008 and periodically reviewed thereafter by its two committees, the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management.

7. In response to paragraph 13 of the resolution, the United Nations system has recently established or enhanced several system-wide initiatives on violence against women, as indicated below.

A. Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and its Task Force on Violence against Women

8. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, headed by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, brings together the gender equality specialists of entities of the United Nations system. During the preparatory process for the Secretary-General's study, the Inter-Agency Network established a Task Force on Violence against Women, consisting of 15 members,[1] which started its work in early 2007, in follow-up to resolution 61/143.

9. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as co-convenors of the Task Force. The Task Force

[1] The Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the regional commissions (represented by the New York Office), UN-Habitat, ILO, the World Bank, United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and IOM. WHO participates in areas of its particular expertise.

aims to achieve the following: (a) enhanced and systematic support by the United Nations system to Member States at the national level in their efforts to eliminate violence against women; (b) systematic and timely exchange of information among entities of the United Nations system about existing and planned strategies, programmes and activities on violence against women; (c) enhanced understanding of resources available from the United Nations system at the national level to support work by Governments and non-governmental organizations to prevent and respond to violence against women; and (d) demonstrated leadership by senior officials of entities of the United Nations system to address violence against women.

10. The Task Force is undertaking, during the period 2007-2008, a series of activities to achieve the above-mentioned aims. The activities include the following: (a) initiating joint programming on violence against women in up to 10 pilot countries and the elaboration of a manual or guidelines on joint programming; (b) enhancing information exchange through the establishment of an e-mail list for United Nations entities and regular updating of the inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women; and (c) enhancing the availability of resources by undertaking a resource flow analysis, through fund-raising efforts for programming on violence against women and by strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women.

11. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality will review the terms of reference of the Task Force and assess progress made in late 2008, in order to develop a future work programme.

12. Through the sponsorship of UNFPA, a full-time coordinator to support the work of the Task Force is expected to assume duties in the fall of 2007. The Division is contributing to the work of the Task Force from within existing resources.

B. United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict

13. Launched at the beginning of 2007, United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict is a system-wide initiative involving 12 United Nations entities.[2] It seeks to intensify and better coordinate the response of the United Nations system to sexual violence in conflict. United Nations Action is undertaking advocacy efforts to raise public awareness about the extent and complexity of sexual violence in armed conflict and to strengthen political will for a more effective response; providing technical and strategic support to United Nations country teams to intensify joint programming to prevent and better respond to sexual violence during and post-conflict; and generating and disseminating knowledge about the scale of the problem and effective responses to sexual violence in conflict. Those efforts are being undertaken in close collaboration with Governments and non-governmental organizations as part of a broader "Stop Rape Now" campaign. In April 2007, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security endorsed the

[2] The Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP and WHO.

coordinated approach proposed by United Nations Action and committed to supporting its work.

14. United Nations Action works through existing United Nations coordination mechanisms including the gender sub-working group and the gender-based violence working group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It seeks to strengthen responses to sexual violence in conflict by utilizing existing mechanisms and tools, such as consolidated appeal processes, poverty reduction strategies and common country assessments on United Nations development assistance frameworks. It also works to enhance the United Nations system's response to Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1612 (2005).

C. Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons and the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

15. The Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons was established in response to resolution 2006/27 of the Economic and Social Council, which requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to coordinate the work of agencies and bodies of the United Nations as well as other relevant intergovernmental organizations in providing technical assistance to countries on human trafficking. The Group aims to improve cooperation and coordination between United Nations entities and other international organizations to facilitate a holistic approach to preventing and combating trafficking in persons, including the protection of, and support for, victims of trafficking.[3] The Group seeks to provide a platform for exchange of information on anti-trafficking activities; to review and support the activities of United Nations entities and other international organizations to ensure the implementation of all international instruments and standards of relevance for preventing and combating trafficking in persons; and to promote effective and efficient use of existing resources.

16. The Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (the Global Initiative),[4] facilitated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is dedicated to ending human trafficking and slavery and involves entities of the United Nations system, including those that are members of the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons, as well as regional organizations, civil society groups and the private sector.[5] The Global Initiative aims to increase public awareness of trafficking; strengthen prevention; reduce demand; rescue and protect victims; improve the effectiveness of law enforcement; ensure the implementation of international commitments; strengthen partnerships; improve data collection, research and analysis; and increase resources committed to this work.

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[3] Chaired by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the following United Nations entities participate in the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons: the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, OHCHR, the Division for the Advancement of Women, INSTRAW, UNIFEM, UNFPA and the World Bank. Other participants include Interpol and IOM.

[4] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 10* (E/2007/30), sect. I.D, decision 16/1.

[5] Members of the Global Initiative's Steering Committee include the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNICEF, OHCHR, ILO, IOM and OSCE.

D. United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

17. Established by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/166, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women supports national, regional and international actions taken by non-governmental organizations and Governments to eliminate violence against women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) serves as the manager of the Trust Fund. Since its establishment in 1996, the Trust Fund has awarded grants totalling approximately $14 million to 237 programmes in 109 countries. Of the total number of grants, nine were made to governmental organizations. Over the past two years its resources have increased to almost $5 million annually, but the demand for Trust Fund support continues to greatly exceed available funds. In 2006, requests for funding exceeded $190 million. Since 2005, United Nations system involvement has expanded, and 17 United Nations entities participated in Trust Fund decision-making concerning grants in 2006.[6]

E. Global Coalition on Women and AIDS

18. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS is an alliance of United Nations agencies[7] and civil society groups, supported by a secretariat located within UNAIDS. It aims to spur action to address the increasing HIV infection rates among women and girls, including by paying particular attention to the intersections between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. The Global Coalition calls for, among other things, the enactment and enforcement of laws that prevent violence against women; support for survivors of violence; and the creation of national AIDS plans that integrate strategies to reduce violence against women and link violence prevention efforts with mainstream HIV prevention and treatment services. In 2006, the Global Coalition and UNIFEM as the manager of the Trust Fund, in collaboration with donors, created a special window in that Fund to support programmes that address the intersection of HIV/AIDS and violence against women.

F. Coordination at the regional level

19. The regional commissions, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Statistics Division), will execute a project on enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women through networking of local knowledge communities, supported by the United Nations Development Account, pending approval by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. The project will include the following activities: (a) undertaking an electronic survey with all stakeholders and experts; (b) holding an international expert meeting to assess existing knowledge, information and learning initiatives in selected countries of the five regional commissions; (c) building and updating an interregional web portal;

[6] The Division for the Advancement of Women, ECLAC, ESCAP, FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNICEF, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office for Project Services, WPF and WHO.

[7] Including UNAIDS, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO.

(d) holding seminars and workshops for users and producers of information in each region; (e) developing a methodology to integrate best practices at the operational level in the five regions; (f) preparing regional and national publications; (g) creating a kit for the collection and use of information on violence against women; and (h) publishing comparative data collected by the five regional commissions.

20. In September 2005, 11 entities of the United Nations system based in Latin America and the Caribbean established an inter-agency working group on violence against women, coordinated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, to work collectively to strengthen, coordinate and integrate current programmes, studies, technical cooperation, training, and information and monitoring activities carried out by these entities. The regional inter-agency working group will establish, with financial support from UNFPA, an observatory on violence against women to monitor the following: (a) implementation of international agreements; (b) implementation of policies, plans and programmes; (c) promotion of legal and judicial reforms; (d) establishment of alliances and collaborative networks; (e) production of statistics; and (f) information dissemination.

III. Dissemination of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women and the General Assembly resolution

21. The Secretary-General's in-depth study was the first global study on violence against women prepared at the request of the General Assembly. It synthesizes existing research, knowledge and experience at the national, regional and global levels, highlights the persistence of various forms of violence against women in all parts of the world, lays out the responsibilities of States to address and prevent such violence and gives examples of a range of promising practices in preventing and responding to violence against women.

22. Specific steps have been taken by a number of entities of the United Nations to give visibility to the study and the resolution, thus encouraging greater attention to the issue of violence against women in programme and project activities of different stakeholders. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women has regularly highlighted the urgency for follow-up to the study and the resolution in various forums and meetings and during missions. The Division for the Advancement of Women has issued the study in book form (in English, French and Spanish) and has disseminated it widely, including through its website, at meetings of intergovernmental bodies and to machineries for the advancement of women at the national level, United Nations resident coordinators and representatives, as well as to other stakeholders that contributed to the preparatory process, such as non-governmental organizations, human rights treaty bodies and regional organizations. The Department of Public Information produced media kits in support of the launch of the study and worked with United Nations Information Centres to promote follow-up.

23. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean continues to provide access to the study through its website and is coordinating a regional inter-agency campaign to disseminate it widely along with regional reports on violence against women. It will distribute both documents at the tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Quito, Ecuador, in August 2007.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific also disseminated the study at various regional events.

24. Several entities organized panels, meetings and discussions to call attention to the study and its recommendations and the resolution. The Division organized a panel discussion on the occasion of the launch of the study in October 2006, and on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in November 2006. It organized an interactive panel on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women: follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study at the international and national levels as part of the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March 2007. An inter-agency effort spearheaded by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women on the theme of "Ending impunity for violence against women and girls", on International Women's Day in March 2007, also called for follow-up to the study and the resolution. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime organized a panel in connection with the sixteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in May 2007.

25. Work to integrate follow-up to the study and the resolution into regular work programmes has also been initiated. In April 2007, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific organized an expert group meeting on regional strategies for implementing the recommendations from the Secretary-General's study on violence against women with particular emphasis on harmful traditional and cultural practices and the role of national machineries. The Commission included the findings and recommendations of the study in a report considered by the ESCAP Committee on Emerging Social Issues at its third session. At the same session, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP made presentations on key aspects of the study.

26. Experts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women frequently draw attention to the study, its findings and recommendations, and to the resolution of the General Assembly in their constructive dialogue with States parties. The Committee also includes references to the study in its concluding comments.

IV. Initiatives on violence against women by entities of the United Nations system in support of national efforts

27. Entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and from their different perspectives, increasingly work on preventing and responding to violence against women. Several have long-standing programmes of support to Governments at the national level. Participants in a workshop for entities of the United Nations system, convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women as part of the preparatory process of the study in December 2005, agreed to take a series of steps so as to achieve a more comprehensive and well coordinated system-wide response to violence against women in regard to the following: enhancing implementation of the legal and policy frameworks that guide United Nations system efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women; data collection and research; awareness-raising, communication and dissemination of good practices; and resource mobilization. The workshop also agreed on steps to strengthen a

coordinated response at the national level and on the role of new and existing coordination mechanisms at the international level.

28. The resolution has provided the impetus for intensifying the preceding efforts, and for achieving greater coordination and effectiveness of such initiatives at different levels. United Nations entities continue to develop and scale up their entity-specific responses to the resolution in different areas.

A. Data and information collection, research and evaluation

29. Data on violence against women are essential to inform sound policy, and many entities undertake or support the collection of such data. The United Nations publication, *The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*,[8] gave an overview of available statistics on violence against women, while the Secretary-General's study provided further details on the prevalence of different forms of violence against women. In accordance with paragraph 19 of resolution 61/143, the Division for the Advancement of Women has initiated work on the establishment of a coordinated database containing data on the extent, nature and consequences of all forms of violence against women, and on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes for, including best practices in, combating such violence. The database is expected to strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders to prevent and address violence against women.

30. Regional commissions have spearheaded data collection efforts at the regional level. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) supported 12 countries in conducting field studies using the "African gender and development index",[9] through which the countries collected qualitative and quantitative data on domestic violence, harmful practices against women, rape, sexual harassment and trafficking in women. An additional 25 countries will be added to the index. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) continued to focus on improving the measurement of violence against women through population-based surveys and is finalizing its web page dedicated to the measurement of violence against women in Europe. A special issue of the ECLAC statistical journal, on violence against women, was produced. ECLAC continued to collect statistics and other information, including on national legislation.

31. Specialized data and information are necessary to enhance legislative, policy and programme work to prevent and address all forms of violence against women. Entities of the United Nations system undertake such data collection and build the capacity of governmental and other actors in this field. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a partner in the International Violence against Women Survey which has been carried out in 11 countries, and the information gathered has enhanced the capacity of the countries concerned to respond more effectively to the phenomenon. In 10 other countries, implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence[10] significantly strengthened the knowledge base and availability of reliable data on the root causes, magnitude and consequences of violence against women.

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[8] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.XVII.7.

[9] Addis Ababa, Economic Commission for Africa, 2004.

[10] Claudia Garcia-Moreno, and others, *WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2005).

Completion of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys resulted in the availability of data on child marriage for over 50 countries, on female genital mutilation/cutting for 10 countries and on attitudes towards domestic violence for over 30 countries. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) plans to strengthen the evidence base pertaining to the intersection of violence against women and HIV prevention.

32. Surveys on economic, physical, emotional and sexual violence against women in Cameroon, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania, undertaken by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), provided data that can be used by urban planners and policymakers in efforts to make cities safer for women. The collection and analysis of data on trafficking patterns and modalities, routes and flows, and counter-trafficking measures is part of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) anti-trafficking projects, while IOM maintains the largest international database on trafficking. Such data inform the development of prevention strategies and responses to trafficking. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working in partnership with other organizations to develop an information management system for data on sexual violence against women. The system will be used in field operations.

33. Data collection methodologies must be ethical, sound and give priority to the safety of women. Guidelines for data collection and research on violence against women prepared by some entities, such as WHO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), are tools for strengthening adherence to those principles.

34. Improvements in data and information collection methodologies and evaluation, as well as in the development and use of indicators, remain necessary, and United Nations entities contribute to progress in that regard. Meetings of experts have put forward recommendations for effective data collection and harmonization of methodologies. For example, as far back as 2001, ECLAC convened an international meeting on gender statistics and indicators for measuring the incidence of and trends in violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean. That meeting was followed by an inter-agency coordination meeting on gender statistics in 2002 to harmonize the methodology for technical assistance on gender indicators with special attention to violence against women. The Economic Commission for Europe organized regional and subregional meetings and workshops in which experts from national statistics offices, users of statistics and international organizations discussed the value of surveys on violence against women and how to improve them. The Division for the Advancement of Women organized an expert group meeting on data collection and methodologies in respect of violence against women that identified ways for overcoming existing gaps and challenges. The United Nations Statistical Division plans to convene a global forum on gender statistics in November 2007 that will aim to improve development of gender statistics and coordination of gender statistics programmes and activities at the national, regional and global levels. Violence against women will be one of the key areas under consideration.

35. The Secretary-General's study pointed to the paucity of evaluation of the impact of measures taken to address violence against women, including methodologies (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1, para. 362). United Nations entities are

working to narrow this gap. Several are developing methodologies and guidelines for impact evaluation so as to improve the quality and effectiveness of strategies to end violence against women. For example, the World Bank, in collaboration with UNIFEM, developed an evaluation methodology and guide to measure the impact of initiatives addressing violence against women which is cost-effective and easily transferable to different contexts. The World Health Organization is developing guidelines for monitoring the impact of primary prevention strategies, while UNICRI has included an assessment component in its anti-trafficking projects.

36. United Nations entities are also taking steps to evaluate the impact of their own work on violence against women. UNIFEM will use the evaluation methodology developed to measure the impact of Trust Fund grants. UNHCR is conducting a global independent evaluation of its activities to prevent and respond to violence against women, which will be completed in 2008.

37. The costs of violence against women and the impacts of violence on other areas of work are increasingly highlighted. Several entities, including the World Bank and UNFPA, are devising concrete plans and strategies for responding to such impacts, and are contributing research or methodology on measuring the costs of violence against women. WHO plans to develop guidelines for estimating the economic impact of injuries resulting from interpersonal violence, in collaboration with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The World Bank held a staff workshop in 2004 on the causes and development impacts of violence against women, which recommended that the World Bank include violence against women in its core analytical and advisory work and gather further evidence of the costs of violence against women to encourage client Governments to take relevant action.

38. Research undertaken by United Nations entities in a variety of regions and countries and on different forms of violence against women has informed legal and policy development as well as advocacy at the global, regional and national levels. Work has also been done to highlight promising interventions in ending violence against women and to highlight violence against women as an impediment to development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

39. The findings generated by the entities of the United Nations system are regularly reflected in reports on violence against women mandated by intergovernmental bodies. Such reports and analysis contribute to the development of global policy responses to this challenge, from different perspectives. The Division prepared other reports of the Secretary-General on different aspects of violence against women for the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies, with input from relevant entities of the United Nations system. The Secretary-General's study on women, peace and security (S/2002/1154), coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, also covered violence against women. Since completion of that study, the Office has continued to provide a coordinated system-wide response on the question in reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council. The reports of the Secretary-General prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime focused on the criminal justice aspects of violence against women, while those prepared by OHCHR supported the work of human rights bodies.

40. Paragraph 18 of resolution 61/143 requested the Statistical Commission to develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women,

a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women. ECE and the Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with other regional commissions and the United Nations Statistical Division, will convene an expert group meeting in the fall of 2007 to assist those intergovernmental bodies in their work. The meeting will build on existing work on measurement and indicators on violence against women, in particular the past work of the ECE and the ECLAC framework for the development of indicators on violence against women.

B. Training and capacity-building measures

41. The United Nations system provided support on capacity-building measures and training programmes on preventing and addressing violence against women for a variety of stakeholders, including government and civil society actors, at the national and local levels. That support, which included the development and use of manuals, guidelines and handbooks, has resulted in stronger responses to violence against women, including through national action plans, strategies and policies, as well as partnerships for action to prevent violence against women.

42. The growing demand for reliable data on different forms and manifestations of violence against women requires that statisticians, including those from national statistics offices, and other data collectors have the capacity to respond to the needs of users, and United Nations entities have implemented a range of activities in this area. For example, ECLAC has built capacity in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to compile data and information on violence against women, including measurement of incidence and trends, and the ECE task force on violence against women aims to train national statistical officers and users on collection of data on violence against women.

43. Government officials, including law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, parliamentarians, the staff of various ministries and health-care providers, have key responsibilities in preventing and responding to violence against women, and many United Nations entities continue to provide or support training and capacity-building for those actors. For example, capacity-building programmes for parliamentarians, local authorities, health-care providers, the judiciary, the police and uniformed personnel conducted by UNFPA and UNIFEM have improved responses to violence against women in a number of countries. The capacity of formal and informal systems of justice to respond to violence against women in the Sudan has been enhanced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) rule of law programme in that country, including through the training of judges and prosecutors. Regional judicial colloquiums on the application of international human rights law at the domestic level, convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women since 1999 in Austria, the Bahamas, Chile, Thailand and the United Republic of Tanzania, provided opportunities for judicial officers to discuss the role of the judiciary in addressing violence against women. UNHCR, in collaboration with UNFPA, WHO and UNAIDS, worked to build the capacity of health professionals on the clinical management of rape survivors. The International Labour Organization (ILO) conducted training on sexual harassment legislation and policies for constituents in China, Malaysia and Pakistan.

44. Capacity-building efforts supported by United Nations entities in the area of trafficking in women have resulted in greater capacity of Governments to plan, implement and coordinate relevant policies and programmes. For instance, ESCAP undertook capacity-building activities in support of effective planning on human trafficking, HIV/AIDS and the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Asia and the Pacific. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime trained officials and supported regional coordination to enhance the capacity of Governments in Western and Southern Africa, while UNICRI trained law enforcement officials and immigration and border police in Costa Rica and Italy. ILO initiated a technical cooperation project on trafficking covering Albania, Moldova and Ukraine. IOM provided technical assistance to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America on the prevention of trafficking.

45. Non-governmental, civil society organizations and community leaders play a critical role in addressing violence against women. A number of United Nations entities provided training and capacity-building for those stakeholders. For example, seminars, workshops and targeted training held by the police advisers of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations aimed at raising community awareness of violence against women. UNIFEM efforts resulted in strengthened capacity of women's organizations to spearhead innovative responses to violence against women at the country level, while women's groups in conflict and post-conflict situations benefited from UNFPA training on violence against women.

46. Training tools for building the capacity of stakeholders to address violence against women and improve the effectiveness of responses to such violence, which can be used on a large scale, have been produced by United Nations entities. These training tools are complemented by a range of manuals and guidelines aimed at achieving better responses to violence against women. They are intended for use by particular groups of stakeholders or in regard to particular forms of violence against women. For example, UNDP training modules on violence against women target policymakers and law enforcement agencies, while the UN-Habitat training manual on domestic violence, developed in collaboration with a non-governmental organization partner, is intended primarily for use by community activists. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is preparing a guide for law enforcement officials on effective responses to violence against women.

47. Some of the training modules and guides prepared by UNFPA and WHO are intended for use by health-care providers and managers in responding to different forms of violence against women. The UNAIDS training manual for Governments aims to strengthen the HIV/AIDS responses of national uniformed services and includes a section on sexual violence and coercion.

48. Sexual harassment and other violence at work is covered in the ILO interactive programme entitled "SOLVE". ILO has also published a guide on addressing violence against women migrant workers. The UNHCR training kit aims at enhancing protection of refugee women, including from violence, while the guidelines for responding to violence against women in humanitarian emergencies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee support different actors in their work with this group of women. OHCHR and UNICEF jointly developed a manual on caring for survivors of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas, and OHCHR plans to develop tools and guidelines on prosecution of sexual violence in conflict and women's access to justice.

49. The UNICRI multidisciplinary training manual is intended for use by all stakeholders involved in tackling trafficking, and WHO has published guidelines on interviewing victims of trafficking.

C. Support for legislative and policy development and implementation

50. The United Nations plays a significant role in the development of policy guidance on violence against women at the global and regional levels to facilitate the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies, promote dialogue and convene meetings of experts and policymakers. It supports States in the development and implementation of legislative initiatives, national policies, strategies and plans to end violence against women, strengthen prevention and provide services to women victims of violence, including by helping to build enhanced collaboration between government and civil society. UNAIDS, WHO and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS have formed a technical working group that will make recommendations on improving attention to violence against women within national AIDS responses and strengthen linkages between AIDS programmes and programmes and services focusing on violence against women.

51. United Nations entities frequently support national law reform efforts aimed at the adoption or revision of laws on violence against women and the effective implementation and monitoring of such laws to enhance accountability and prevent impunity. To that end, United Nations entities have acted as resources, providing advice and technical assistance to stakeholders engaged in law reform efforts. For example, the work of gender equality advocates, including networks of women parliamentarians, supported by entities such as UNIFEM, UNICEF, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNDP, resulted in the adoption and implementation of laws, policies and strategies to end violence against women and children and to ensure protection of victims. ILO provided technical advice on policy and legislation on sexual harassment in several countries, while other entities contributed to strengthening national monitoring and implementation of existing legislation.

52. United Nations entities have collaborated with national authorities and machineries for the advancement of women to enhance national policies on violence against women. For example, UNFPA supported the development of a comprehensive national strategy to address violence against women in Morocco. UNIFEM supported the Ministry of Women's Affairs of Afghanistan in drafting an interim national action plan for the women of that country, which included attention to, and an indicator on, violence against women. Department of Peacekeeping Operations gender units in peacekeeping missions collaborated with national machineries for the advancement of women in Burundi, Haiti, Kosovo and Timor-Leste with regard to responses to violence against women. WHO has worked with national partners to develop policies on violence against women as a follow-up to the *World Report on Violence and Health*.[11] Its efforts have resulted in the generation of national reports on violence and health and the appointment of focal points on violence against women in the ministries of health in almost 100 countries.

[11] Etienne G. Krug, and others, editors, *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002). Available from http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/index.html.

53. Cooperation between civil society organizations and government actors in developing and implementing strategies that address violence against women is considered good practice. United Nations entities have facilitated the development and strengthening of such strategic partnerships in many countries. For example, gender units and advisers in peacekeeping missions have worked to increase collaboration between the police, the judicial system and national victim-support organizations in Sierra Leone. They have also advocated for the inclusion of women's non-governmental organizations in efforts to combat trafficking in Kosovo. WHO targeted multidisciplinary groups, including journalists, civil servants, health-care providers and policymakers, in its sensitization activities on various forms of violence against women.

54. Some United Nations entities provided financial support for policy development while others supported the creation of institutions. For example, the World Bank provided an Institutional Development Fund grant in the amount of $300,000 to support Uruguay in its efforts to implement international, regional and domestic laws pertaining to violence against women, improve access to justice for victims and implement the first national plan on domestic violence. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) collaborated with the Ministry of Women's Affairs of the Occupied Palestinian Territories to establish the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre, which serves as a resource centre and observatory and focuses on women's rights legislation and violence against women as two of its key areas of attention.

55. The Secretary-General's study points to the need for an enhanced focus on the prevention of violence against women. United Nations entities are responding to that need by supporting national and local efforts to implement a range of initiatives, including awareness-raising and advocacy efforts, working with men and boys, and implementing projects aimed at enhancing women's safety.

56. Many United Nations entities continue to engage in, and/or support awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns and outreach activities to raise knowledge of violence against women. For example, many entities support and lead advocacy efforts during the annual 16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women campaign, together with Governments and non-governmental organizations. Similar efforts are regularly undertaken on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Such advocacy takes the form of publications, posters, public service announcements, films, videos, radio, theatre, television programmes and the dissemination of information through websites. UNIFEM, for example, has developed media and communications strategies for effective advocacy on violence against women.

57. The engagement of men and boys in efforts to prevent violence against women has become an area of focus of a growing number of entities of the United Nations system. Activities include the following: conducting workshops, producing films, preparing papers and reports on men's roles in ending violence against women, developing manuals and collaborating with existing men's initiatives on violence against women. ESCAP, for example, conducted a subregional training workshop on the elimination of violence against women in partnership with men in New Delhi; and facilitated the production and screening of a film on young men speaking about violence against women and gender equality, called *Young Men Speak Out*. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

(INSTRAW) produced a series of papers on men's roles and responsibilities in ending violence against women and launched a collaborative research programme and online discussion on violence against women focusing on masculinities and male roles. UNICEF developed a manual for football coaches, designed to encourage coaches to talk to boys about violence against women and promote a culture of non-violence. UNHCR makes efforts to involve more male staff and refugees in understanding, preventing and addressing violence against women. The UNDP Asia Pacific Bureau is launching a regional programme on working with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence that will be implemented jointly with UNFPA and UNIFEM in the 2008-2011 programme cycle and will produce a regional public awareness campaign and provide country-level capacity-building and support.

58. Other prevention strategies seek to enhance women's safety in public places. For example, audits aimed at making the urban environment safer have been undertaken by UN-Habitat in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In an effort to ensure women's safety and prevent sexual harassment, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) supported the Government of Bangladesh in setting up "women's sections" in major markets. Women collecting firewood in humanitarian settings are frequently exposed to sexual violence, and several entities are implementing measures to reduce the time women spend outside camps collecting firewood, for example by implementing training programmes on fuel-efficient stove-making. UNHCR, in coordination with civil society partners, plans to launch a safe-school initiative that seeks to ensure that violence against women is prevented in schools.

59. Services and support for women victims of violence are an essential element of a comprehensive approach to violence against women, and several entities have developed and/or implemented projects in that area. For example, UNHCR has established drop-in centres to facilitate, for survivors of violence against women, access to health and psychosocial services, shelters and justice. UNFPA, in collaboration with WHO, has developed a minimum package of services for women affected by sexual violence in conflict and crisis situations. WHO is planning to establish local networks for care of victims of violence against women as entry points for HIV/AIDS prevention treatment in Belize, El Salvador and Honduras.

60. At the same time, United Nations entities continued to support services provided to victims of violence by governmental and civil society organizations, including free legal services, counselling, mediation and rehabilitation services. For example, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provided assistance to One-Stop Centres in South Africa, which bring under one roof all services for victims and survivors of violence against women in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing manner. IOM facilitated access to counselling and HIV testing for rape victims and has funded a 24-hour hotline for victims of trafficking in South Africa.

D. Internal policies, training and guidelines on violence against women of the United Nations system

61. Internal policies, guidelines and training programmes on violence against women have been put in place in United Nations entities. For example, in 2005 UNDP launched an online mandatory course for its staff on workplace harassment,

sexual exploitation and abuse of authority, and such a course is also mandatory for staff of the United Nations Secretariat. The UNHCR code of conduct, drawn up in 2004, incorporated the Secretary-General's bulletin on sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), and focal points are in place in all UNHCR offices to carry out the recommendations of the bulletin. UNHCR aims to have in place standard operating procedures for prevention of violence against women and response by the end of 2007.

62. Entities of the United Nations system, including UNHCR and UNICEF, provide training on violence against women for staff to enable the organizations to meet standards in prevention and response. Similarly, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has supported or implemented training activities for mission personnel on violence against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. OHCHR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) are contributing to initiatives intended to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel.

V. Conclusions

63. **Entities of the United Nations system have stepped up their efforts at addressing violence against women in accordance with their mandates and have developed, supported and/or implemented a range of initiatives aimed at preventing and eliminating such violence. Their efforts gained momentum during the preparatory process for the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women. The entities reviewed their work, identified gaps and challenges and initiated steps for addressing them.**

64. **In response to resolution 61/143 of the General Assembly, entities of the United Nations system are strengthening cooperation and collaboration, through new and existing mechanisms. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, takes a lead role in those efforts. Through its Task Force, which became operational in early 2007, the Network is responding directly to the priorities highlighted in the resolution. Several thematic initiatives involving relevant United Nations entities further contribute to enhanced coordination and collaboration, avoid duplication of efforts and increase impact.**

65. **The resolution urges greater coordination and intensification of United Nations support for national efforts, which will be achieved, inter alia, through the joint programming on violence against women being developed by the Task Force and by United Nations Action on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict.**

66. **The resolution stresses that adequate resources should be assigned within the United Nations system for work on violence against women, and calls upon the Network to consider ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The Task Force will undertake a resource flow analysis to assess the available resources and elaborate recommendations for their most effective and efficient use. Efforts are under way to increase the resources available for such work. The Trust Fund has initiated a process of evaluating the impact of its projects. The Network will also consider ways and means to enhance the**

effectiveness of the Trust Fund as a system-wide funding mechanism for preventing and redressing all forms of violence against women and girls.

67. The Secretary-General is committed to a stronger and more visible role for the United Nations in efforts to eliminate violence against women and will spearhead United Nations initiatives in that regard. The Secretary-General's global campaign on violence against women, to be launched towards the end of 2007, will focus attention on three main areas: (a) global advocacy; (b) United Nations leadership; and (c) strengthened efforts and partnerships at the national and regional levels.

Annex

Contributors to the inventory of United Nations system activities on violence against women

Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Department of Political Affairs

Department of Public Information

Division for the Advancement of Women

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Inter-Agency Network for Women and Gender Equality

Inter-Agency Standing Committee

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

United Nations Statistics Division

United Nations University (UNU)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

United Nations A/62/202

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Item 65 of the provisional agenda*
Advancement of women

Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 60/138. It reviews the activities undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities to improve the situation of women in rural areas, including by addressing the empowerment of rural women. Recommendations for consideration by the Assembly are provided.

* A/62/150.

07-45029 (E) 270807

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 60/138, on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution, addressing different aspects of the empowerment of rural women. In response to that resolution, the present report summarizes actions taken by Member States[1] and United Nations entities[2] to improve the situation of rural women and support their empowerment. Recommendations for consideration by the Assembly are provided.

II. Background

2. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) data,[3] in 2006 40.4 per cent of the total number of employed women worked in agriculture. Women agricultural workers are responsible for half of the world's food production and are the main producers of staple crops, which account for 60 to 80 per cent of the food intake in developing countries. Rural women also generate non-agricultural income. They often work long hours in difficult circumstances, combining agricultural work and reproductive work in the household, including caring for children, the elderly and the sick. Women in many rural areas are responsible for fuel and water collection, often without adequate technologies.

3. The lack of infrastructure in many areas, including roads, water and sanitation systems and energy sources, increases women's work and time burdens.[4] Education for women and girls in rural areas remains a problem. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that 77 million children of primary-school age are not enrolled in school, of whom 57 per cent are girls.[5] In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, over 80 per cent of the out-of-school children live in rural areas.

4. Rural women in many areas do not participate in decision-making processes, and their rights and needs are often neglected. In many countries, the situation of women living in rural areas continues to deteriorate because of the lack of development, migration to towns, the ageing of the population and the lack of

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[1] Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Portugal, Russian Federation, Senegal, Tajikistan, Thailand, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Yemen.

[2] The Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, ILO, the International Maritime Organization, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Bank, the World Tourism Organization and the International Organization for Migration responded to the request for inputs for the preparation of the report.

[3] *Global Employment Trends for Women*, ILO, March 2007.

[4] World Bank Working Paper No. 73, chap. II, "Gender and time poverty in sub-Saharan Africa", by Aslihan Kes and Hema Swaminathan, 2006.

[5] *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations*, UNESCO, 2006.

education and training opportunities. Rural women are often among the poorest and most vulnerable.

A. International conventions

5. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women continued to play a critical role in systematically addressing the situation of rural women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women specifically addresses the situation of rural women in article 14. A review of 66 concluding comments adopted by the Committee during its twenty-ninth to thirty-seventh sessions, from July 2003 to January 2007, indicated that the expert body consistently enquired into the situation of rural women, covering a large number of issues in all geographic regions.

6. In its dialogues with States parties, the Committee called for the systematic integration of rural women's issues in national policies and programmes on, inter alia, nutrition, water and sanitation, health-care services, education, vocational training and income-generation opportunities. The Committee highlighted rural women's access to land, credit, financial resources and new technologies as critical to poverty alleviation. The Committee repeatedly called for the further improvement of the availability of health-care information and services, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health.

7. Concern was expressed about the limited availability in rural areas of means of redress and protection, including protection orders, and support services for victims of violence such as legal aid, shelters and medical assistance. The Committee identified the improvement of women's social and economic situation in rural areas as an important strategy in eliminating their vulnerability to traffickers. It called for services to be put in place for the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking.

8. Discrimination against women with respect to ownership and inheritance of land was identified as a major obstacle to rural women's economic empowerment. The importance of access to and control over land and credit facilities and access to training opportunities was highlighted. The Committee also identified deeply entrenched prejudices and stereotypes as major obstacles to rural women's ability to enjoy their human rights in equality with men. The Committee also called for the full participation of rural women in the formulation and implementation of all sectoral policies and programmes.

9. At its sixty-first session the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[6] which defines the rights of persons with disabilities and sets out a plan of implementation. The Convention specifically calls on States parties to ensure the equal rights and advancement of women and girls with disabilities (article 6) and makes several references to the rights of people living in rural areas (articles 9 and 26). The right to the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability includes access for persons with disabilities to gender-sensitive health services close to people's own communities, including in rural areas (article 25). The adoption of the Convention

[6] Resolution 61/106.

provides a new opportunity for systematically monitoring the situation of women with disabilities in rural areas.

B. Intergovernmental processes

10. In its resolution 60/138, the General Assembly invited the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to pay attention to the situation of rural women in the consideration of its priority themes. The Commission addressed the situation of rural women as a cross-cutting area of concern. In its agreed conclusions entitled "Enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work", adopted at its fiftieth session, in 2006, the Commission called for the review and implementation of policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reached women, in particular in rural and remote areas.[7]

11. At its fifty-first session, in 2007, the Commission considered the theme "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child". The Commission called for efforts to ensure gender equality in enrolment and completion of schooling at the early childhood, primary and all other educational levels for all girls, especially in neglected and marginalized areas and communities and rural and remote areas. Financial incentives, stipends and nutrition programmes were also called for to improve enrolment and retention rates for girls at all educational levels. The Commission also raised the need for the promotion of policies and measures to empower young women economically, especially in rural and remote areas. The increased access of girls to information and communications technology (ICT), particularly girls living in poverty, in rural and remote areas and in disadvantaged situations, was highlighted.[8]

12. Since the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/138, other intergovernmental processes and outcomes have also specifically addressed the situation of rural women. The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society (2005),[9] reaffirmed the commitment to building ICT capacity and confidence in the use of ICT for all, including, inter alia, women, indigenous peoples and remote and rural communities.

13. At the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government made a commitment to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination, including by guaranteeing the right of women to own and inherit property and ensuring equal access for women to productive assets and resources, including land, credit and technology.[10]

14. In recognition of the link between poverty eradication and productive employment, the Economic and Social Council, at its high-level segment in 2006, focused on creating an environment conducive to generating full and productive

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[7] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2006/27 and Corr.1).

[8] Ibid., *2007, Supplement No. 7* (E/2007/27).

[9] See A/60/687.

[10] See resolution 60/1, para. 58.

employment and decent work for all. In his report to the Council,[11] the Secretary-General noted that both decent employment creation and productivity growth in on- and off-farm activities were strategies for poverty reduction in rural areas. Women, in particular, needed secure rights to land, training and technology. The importance of women's self-help groups and producer groups in overcoming credit and market constraints was recognized.

III. National-level action by Member States and United Nations entities to improve the situation of women in rural areas and support their empowerment

15. In its resolution 60/138, the General Assembly invited Member States, in collaboration with the organizations of the United Nations and civil society, as appropriate, to attach greater importance to the improvement of the situation of rural women, including indigenous women, in their national, regional and global development strategies. In response to resolution 60/138, Member States and the United Nations system have taken a number of actions towards empowering rural women, improving their situation and ensuring attention to their priorities, needs and contributions. Sections A to G below highlight actions taken, pursuant to the resolution, to create an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women and ensuring attention to their needs and contributions; integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes; support rural women's full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels; invest in and strengthen efforts to meet the basic needs of rural women; support the remunerative non-agricultural employment of rural women; ensure that rural women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, including through the right to inheritance; and provide access to and use of ICT.

A. Creating an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women

16. In its resolution 60/138 the General Assembly called for the creation of an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women and ensuring attention to their needs and contributions. Initiatives undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities included increasing attention to rural women in gender equality policies and strategies; developing specific policies and strategies on rural women; promoting legislative change; carrying out targeted activities for rural women; increasing the visibility of their situations and improving gender statistics.

17. Several countries included a stronger focus on rural women in their national strategies on gender equality. The national programme on gender equality of Mongolia, which is currently in its second implementation phase, included a focus on rural development with a special emphasis on women's socio-economic situation. Ukraine established a State programme on gender equality through 2010, aimed at decreasing gender stereotypes in rural areas. The Government of Tajikistan adopted its guidelines for a State policy to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for

[11] E/2006/55.

men and women of Tajikistan for the period 2001-2010, which addressed the specific needs of rural women, including in the context of land reform.

18. In some countries specific strategies on rural women or gender equality strategies for rural development or agriculture were developed. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Viet Nam adopted a gender strategy and plan of action on agriculture and rural development through 2010, with the goal of coordinating and promoting efforts of agencies, mass organizations and individuals to realize gender equality in agriculture and in rural development. Ecuador plans to develop a national policy on rural women. Yemen set up a general department for the development of rural women within the Ministry of Agriculture and established rural women's departments at the governorate level, which were responsible for running projects targeted at rural women. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support to Governments in developing national and local development strategies and plans for improving the livelihood of rural women in Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uganda, within the Millennium Development Goals framework.

19. Several countries contributed to establishing an enabling environment by giving attention to the legislative change required to improve the situation of rural women. Viet Nam integrated the concerns of rural women in a number of laws aimed at improving their standard of living. The Gender Equality Law of 2006 facilitated gender equality activities in remote and mountainous areas, in areas of extremely difficult socio-economic conditions and among ethnic minority groups. The national machinery for gender equality and the Ministry of Agriculture of Colombia cooperated in the implementation of the legal framework to support rural women, including through the provision of targeted funds for capacity-building on project management and entrepreneurship for rural women.

20. Targeted activities for rural women were also supported by a number of countries. In Mexico, the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples established programmes and provided financial support for indigenous women and their organizations. In its development assistance, Monaco supported rural women in Africa through income-generating projects, women's cooperatives, literacy education and training in business practices. The Ministry of Agriculture of Iraq has developed a set of project proposals on women in rural areas (2007), with the goal of enhancing their livelihoods through the improved use of home gardens, the raising of poultry and carpet production.

21. Other efforts were made to increase the visibility of and attention to the role of rural women. Belgium, for example, continued to provide support to the Dimitra project "Rural women and development: networking and partnerships", implemented by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Africa and the Middle East. The project links over 1,500 organizations and provides information on projects concerning rural women, food security and sustainable development. It enhances attention to the role of rural women in rural development, using both traditional and new communication and information technologies, promotes information exchange between development actors, and disseminates information on the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations on rural women.

22. In response to the increasing demand for accurate and relevant gender statistics to facilitate gender-sensitive planning of agricultural and rural

development policies and programmes, FAO assisted national statistical institutions in Burkina Faso, Chile, Hungary, Malaysia, Namibia, Togo, Viet Nam and Zambia to disaggregate existing data sets by sex. Technical support was given to over 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America to mainstream a gender perspective in their agricultural censuses.

B. Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes

23. In its resolution 60/138 the General Assembly called for the integration of a gender perspective into the design, implementation and evaluation of development policies and programmes, including budget policies, paying increased attention to the needs of rural women so as to ensure that they benefit from policies and programmes adopted in all spheres and that the disproportionate number of rural women living in poverty is reduced. Member States used a variety of measures to incorporate attention to rural women in policies, legislation, strategies, programmes and resource allocation.

24. Attention to rural women was incorporated into rural development plans and programmes in a number of countries. The programme for rural development through 2010 in the Russian Federation (2006), for example, included measures that benefit women in rural areas, such as increasing the number of schools and pre-school institutions and improving access to health care. The Government of Belarus developed a programme for the revitalization and improvement of rural livelihoods (2005-2010), aimed at creating favourable social and economic conditions in rural areas, including job opportunities for young women. Within the context of its national agricultural and rural development plan and anti-poverty actions, Algeria targets rural women, and in particular households headed by women.

25. Within the European Union, the mainstreaming of equal opportunities is an integral element of the Community Support Framework and a general objective for all operational programmes. Applicants to the Agricultural and Rural Development Operational Programme for 2004-2006 received extra points in the scoring system if they included the improvement of the working conditions of women in their business plan.

26. Initiatives taken included the incorporation of gender perspectives into existing mechanisms to ensure attention to, and positive impact on, the situation of rural women. A network for social protection in Colombia (2006), set up to address extreme poverty, integrated a gender perspective in the design and implementation of its programmes to support rural women.

27. A number of initiatives were also reported on gender mainstreaming in the area of development cooperation. Finland supported long-term rural development programmes that promote and support gender equality in Ethiopia, Nepal, Nicaragua and Viet Nam. Gender equality was a cross-cutting theme in all interventions.

28. Innovative work was reported on gender-sensitive budgeting. Egypt's national economic and social plan (2002-2007) included attention to the gender mainstreaming strategy, including gender-sensitive budgeting. As a result, allocations for women-specific programmes doubled. In addition, a number of pilot projects were conducted in rural areas for the social, economic and political

empowerment of women, combining literacy and microcredit programmes. In Kosovo the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supported gender-responsive budgeting initiatives by involving key partners in ministries, local municipalities and women's organizations. In one municipality, the gender-sensitive budgeting report, focused on rural women, led to the allocation of resources to establish greenhouses in 12 villages and a collection point for women's produce to facilitate access to markets. UNDP provided capacity-building in a number of countries on gender-sensitive budgeting to ensure better targeting of resource allocations, improved outcomes and mainstreaming of gender considerations into national and state-level policy frameworks.

C. Promoting the participation of rural women in decision-making

29. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/138, recognized that the empowerment of rural women required their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels, including through affirmative action and support for women's organizations, trade unions, civil society groups and other associations promoting rural women's rights. A number of measures to empower rural women through participation in political decision-making were reported. Although the involvement of rural women in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes has been recognized as an important means of improving their situation, little information was provided on efforts in this regard. Similarly, very little information was available on the impact of efforts to improve women's participation in different areas, although UNDP reported that the monitoring of the implementation of projects by locally elected women in India led to better delivery of basic services in rural areas.

30. Member States supported the political participation of women at the local level. In China the Ministry of Civil Affairs stipulated that women should be represented in village committees. Women's participation in local elections was supported in Thailand. The participation of women in rural areas in Japan was supported by the adoption in 2005 of the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas and by guidance provided on targets for women's participation, including as board members of agricultural cooperatives. In Bangladesh, the Government legislated that three seats were to be reserved for women in each Union Parishad (local council). To further strengthen the role of locally elected women, the number of Union Parishad Project Implementation Committees was increased so that women could chair one quarter of them.

31. Targets of 50 per cent representation by women in decision-making structures in management and leadership committees, including in rural and camp settings and return areas, were also set by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). An indicator scorecard based on 2005 data illustrated that about half of all UNHCR camps met or nearly met this standard. UNHCR found that the 50 per cent representation of women was easier to achieve in distribution committees in refugee camps than in camp management committees that negotiate on refugee protection issues. Cultural stereotypes and practices on expected gender roles often limited women's actual participation in camp committees.

32. Training was an important strategy adopted to support women's participation. Training manuals were developed in China for rural women interested in running for

local elections. Thailand's Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development plans to hold workshops to train women candidates for the 2007 local elections.

33. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) trained women scientists and policymakers in land degradation assessment and environmental accounting methods to improve the design, implementation and monitoring of polices and programmes. The UNEP project on capacity-building through partnership and ICT for using indigenous knowledge for nature conservation and natural disaster management in Africa sought to enhance the participation of rural women in work on indigenous knowledge. Project studies in Kenya, Swaziland and the United Republic of Tanzania highlighted the role of rural women in their communities as the main custodians of indigenous knowledge critical for poverty alleviation.

D. Providing for the basic needs of rural women

34. In its resolution 60/138 the General Assembly called on Member States and United Nations entities to invest in and strengthen efforts to meet basic needs. A broad range of actions were undertaken by Member States, including social support measures to lower the risk of poverty for rural women; improvement to infrastructure such as water supplies and transport systems; increased access to education and training; and efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and prevent the trafficking of women.

35. Efforts were undertaken in some countries to improve the social security systems, as women working on family farms do not benefit from public insurance schemes. In Lebanon women working in agriculture have access to social benefits only if they have permanent contracts or work for export-oriented companies; health insurance is optional for family enterprises. The Government is developing a social action plan to reduce poverty by strengthening the social security system. Greece will pass legislation promoting obligatory insurance for both spouses working in an agricultural family enterprise. On the basis of the findings of three ILO case studies, the National Registry of Workers and Employers in Argentina will register rural women as workers with entitlements to social benefits. In Bangladesh government allowances for the Widows and Destitute Women Programme were increased for 2006-2007.

36. Older women and widows in villages in Hungary risk living below the poverty line because their pensions are small or because they receive only survivor's pensions. To address this situation, the Government increased the survivor's pension in 2006 and 2007. Belize introduced a non-contributory pension for women aged 65 and older, which has assisted poor rural women.

37. Improvements in rural infrastructure to benefit rural women were reported. The Government of Viet Nam worked to improve the electricity grid, roads and water. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) assisted in the development of rural energy systems and biofuel production, which benefited women through their labour-saving impact, the creation of employment and the provision of income-generating opportunities. The World Bank/Inter-American Development Bank road improvement programme in Peru led to improved transport systems, including 3,000 kilometres of pedestrian tracks heavily used by women.

This reduced travel times by up to half and improved access to education, health services and markets.

38. Viet Nam also reported progress in providing rural women with increased access to health care. Almost all villages and wards were reported to have public health units with medical staff and basic equipment. In line with the national strategy for reproductive health care, 2001-2010, almost all provinces had reproductive health centres

39. Measures to address the educational needs of rural women included abolishing tuition and textbook fees for students of poor families to facilitate compulsory education in rural regions in China. Almost 100,000 rural women's schools were opened to provide training and income-generation activities. Local authorities in Algeria set up specialized units in rural areas to promote vocational training for girls and women. These efforts are complemented by literacy programmes run by local organizations that also provide information on health and reproductive issues and income-generating activities. Girls and women in difficult circumstances, particularly in remote and rural areas, received special attention in UNESCO education programmes. UNESCO supported the efforts of Member States to increase girls' access to, and their retention in, primary education and their transition to secondary education, in fulfilment of the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals. Belarus increased rural women's access to educational institutions specialized in rural development and agriculture.

40. Several initiatives were undertaken to provide relevant training for rural women. The Federal Ministry of Agrarian Reform of Mexico provided, through its women's programme, support to capacity-building and training for rural women in the area of entrepreneurship. Women in rural areas in Viet Nam were provided with training in business skills related to agriculture, forestry and fishery production. Senegal included capacity-building activities in its programme on microfinance for women in rural areas. The Ministry of Agriculture of Iraq is planning to train women engineers and extension workers on its staff in order to better respond to the needs of women in rural areas.

41. In Viet Nam and Cambodia, ILO contributed to national efforts to increase the socio-economic status of rural women by providing training on gender equality issues, women workers' rights, life skills, small business management skills and vocational skills, as well as by establishing self-help groups. Gender equality training was also provided to the husbands of women beneficiaries, local officials and leaders. As a result of these interventions, income levels increased and women's participation in decision-making in their families and communities was strengthened. Assumptions about women's and men's public and private roles among women, their husbands and local institutions were also changed.

42. Significant efforts were made to combat HIV/AIDS among women in rural areas. The Women's Department of the Ministry of Human Development of Belize conducted workshops in rural areas to strengthen the country's multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS. The Government identified the need to change attitudes as one of the greatest challenges in HIV/AIDS prevention. Mexico provided rapid HIV testing for pregnant women in rural areas who had no access to health facilities and provided anti-retroviral treatment to women who lacked social security coverage.

43. Recognizing that gender inequalities are a driving force of the epidemic, FAO developed agricultural sector strategies with a focus on HIV/AIDS and gender issues in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Together with the World Food Programme (WFP), FAO set up Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable youths, to improve their agricultural knowledge and skills. Adult Farmer Field and Life Schools targeted poor households affected by HIV/AIDS, with a special emphasis on households headed by women.

44. The vulnerability of women and girls in rural areas to trafficking because of the lack of economic opportunity and poor social conditions was addressed by several United Nations entities. Measures were taken to inform women on the risks of trafficking through awareness-raising campaigns about legal migration channels. In the Upper Mekong region, for example, UNESCO contributed to the production and broadcasting of soap operas on the local radio in minority languages to provide information about the dangers of trafficking.

45. Efforts were also undertaken to provide assistance to victims of trafficking. Since 2006 the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan, has assisted victims of trafficking, most of them women from rural areas. The victims are provided with food, shelter and medical and legal assistance, as well as family reunification assistance. The IOM information campaign has reached out to the general public through the use of radio spots and information tools such as posters. IOM has proactively engaged female officials of the Ministry of Interior in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases.

46. The World Tourism Organization established the Task Force to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation in Tourism, which brings together key players from government, the tourism industry, international organizations, NGOs and media associations. While the aim of the Task Force is to prevent the sexual exploitation of children in tourism, in March 2007, its scope was broadened to include the protection of children and young women against any form of exploitation in tourism.

47. Women of concern to UNHCR in rural areas live primarily in camps or settlements managed by national authorities. UNHCR promotes the well-being of these women through the provision of food and non-food items, health care, water and sanitation; training on income generation; awareness-raising on their rights; and education on how to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. Women receive individual documentation that gives them the freedom to move and be involved in economic activities and skill development activities.

E. Supporting the non-agricultural employment of rural women

48. In its resolution 60/138 the General Assembly called for support for the remunerative non-agricultural employment of rural women, improved working conditions and increased access to productive resources. Member States and United Nations entities recognized the need to expand women's employment opportunities through the development of small enterprises and the strengthening of women's access to finance, technology and training. A combination of developing new skills, supporting cooperative arrangements, building on existing skills, such as traditional

handicrafts, and expanding into new sectors such as tourism, as well as the provision of funding, widened women's access to non-agricultural employment opportunities.

49. Multidimensional strategies addressed the employment needs of rural women. Viet Nam reported on actions taken to improve skills, create more jobs and encourage rural women's participation in household services, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, including projects in agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and "one village, one product" projects. Measures undertaken included establishing skills development programmes for women labourers, restoring and developing traditional handicraft villages and developing industries for agricultural and forestry products, services and tourism in rural areas.

50. A number of specific targeted measures were taken to encourage rural women's participation in the workforce. The Social Welfare Services in Cyprus provided grants to NGOs to support services for pre-school and school-age children, persons with disabilities and older persons in both rural and urban areas to facilitate women's employment opportunities. The grants distributed for programmes in rural areas were slightly higher than in urban areas. A joint World Bank/Inter-American Development Bank programme in Peru set targets for the involvement of rural women in its road improvement programme — women had to make up 20 per cent of the members of road committees and 10 per cent of the members of road maintenance microenterprises.

51. In recognition of the linkage between poverty and gender inequality, the Government of Bangladesh supported women's income-generating activities through training, technical and non-formal education and access to credit. To address the population decline in rural areas caused by lack of employment, the national population policy of Croatia supported alternative forms of employment, including support for female entrepreneurs.

52. Significant efforts were made to provide training, capacity-building and skills development for rural women. Portugal provided professional training and access to new technologies for women. Since women account for 25 to 30 per cent of all small-scale entrepreneurs, mostly in the agricultural sector, the Russian Federation provided training to upgrade the skills of unemployed women. The Czech Republic's national action plan for the creation of equal opportunities for women and men included retraining programmes to increase employment options. More than 23,000 people were trained at vocational training centres in Mongolia in 2005 and 2006, 65 per cent of whom were women. An ILO/UNHCR partnership supported women's socio-economic empowerment through capacity-building for refugees and returnees on entrepreneurship culture and microcredit. The provision of funds for follow-up in Angola and Mozambique, in the form of establishment of business plans, increased the effectiveness of the training.

53. UNDP undertook interventions aimed at eliminating illiteracy, upgrading social skills and providing vocational training to assist women in gaining access to sustainable jobs in the Syrian Arab Republic. In Uzbekistan, access to microcredit in combination with capacity-building helped 6,250 rural women to start their own businesses and achieve improved socio-economic status in society. The IFAD Rural Enterprises Project organized training programmes in income-generating activities and small business management skills. Through these programmes, unemployed and underemployed people, mainly women, gained skills in various areas, including

leatherwork, bead-making, soap production, carpentry, hairdressing, dressmaking, and batik tie-dye. The World Intellectual Property Organization developed projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America that built capacity among indigenous and rural women to address intellectual property rights in handicrafts and traditional creative arts and enabled them to protect, promote and market their products more effectively.

54. The establishment of women's cooperatives and self-help groups was another strategy to increase the participation of women in non agricultural employment. In Myanmar, the Human Development Initiative microfinance project promoted the creation of self-reliance groups as a key strategy for poverty alleviation in over 3,475 village groups. The initiative addressed activities related to HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation, education and illiteracy. More than 250,000 women participated. The 111 women's agro-tourist cooperatives established in Greece to facilitate women's access to the labour market illustrated the potential of rural women, although the cooperatives faced problems in marketing their products and services. As a result of targeted outreach, rural women represented a high percentage of beneficiaries in the work of the International Trade Centre (ITC) to assist small businesses in Brazil, Cambodia, Kenya, Mongolia, Sierra Leone and South Africa. These projects created new employment opportunities for women and raised their incomes. The establishment of women-headed cooperatives supported women's participation in export development at all levels.

F. Increasing rural women's right to land, property and inheritance

55. In its resolution 60/138 the General Assembly called for designing and revising laws to ensure that, where private ownership of land and property exists, rural women receive full and equal rights to own land and property. Access to land defines women's economic status in rural areas within and outside the household. Land is a productive, livelihood-sustaining asset as well as a condition for women's access to credit. In countries where women face no legal obstacles to obtaining land they often lack financial resources to purchase land of good quality. Member States and entities of the United Nations system undertook legislative measures, developed guidelines, carried out research and implemented specific projects to address these constraints.

56. Legislative measures to secure women's access to land included the revision of the Land Law in Viet Nam in July 2004, which required all land-use certificates to bear the names of both husbands and wives. The law protected women's rights to private property and property inheritance on an equal basis with those of men. At the request of households, authorities at the local level exchanged old certificates for new ones. Awareness-raising activities targeted all title holders, including women, who often remained unaware of their rights to property and inheritance. Greece abolished discriminatory provisions in the law governing the registration of farms and agricultural enterprises. While in the past married male farmers could sell land independently, the sale of land now required the consent of both spouses.

57. Research initiatives included a two-year research partnership between IFAD and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and ActionAid in Pakistan, aimed at examining the causality behind women's landlessness, poverty and status and at providing a strong case for land reform that would end women's marginalization.

The IFAD Southern and Eastern Africa Division developed a set of guidelines to better address land tenure security in the projects and programmes it supports.

58. Project initiatives included a programme for women's rights in the land reform process in Kyrgyzstan, supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which led to amendments to the Law on Agricultural Land Management. The programme strengthened rural women's right to ownership and inheritance of land and empowered them to claim their right to land and other agricultural assets, thereby bringing effective changes in the livelihoods of rural families.

59. Some attention was given to the special needs of families of migrants. Mexico proposed assigning land ownership to women whose parents, spouses or children migrated in order to secure their access to credit.

G. Improving rural women's access to information and communications technology

60. The importance of ICT was recognized in resolution 60/138, in which the Assembly called for the identification of best practices for ensuring that rural women had access to and full participation in the area of ICT. Member States and United Nations entities supported projects to bridge the digital divide and strengthen access to and benefits from ICT for women living in rural areas, in order to facilitate their empowerment and enable them to play a more active role in the economic and social development of their communities. A number of promising practices were identified, including in respect of training, improved access to communal ICT facilities or the establishment of specific facilities for women, and support for rural women's use of ICT for income generation and employment creation.

61. The provision of training was a major strategy for increasing access to and benefits of ICT for rural women. With the support of the Government, the German Women in Rural Areas Association trained women from rural areas to serve as multipliers and to support other women in rural areas in using new technologies for the direct marketing of agricultural products and services. In Uzbekistan, a UNDP-supported project to improve access to ICT provided training to women, including those with disabilities, and resulted in the creation of more than 250 personal web pages.

62. In recognition of the constraints faced by women and girls in having access to communal ICT facilities, a number of United Nations entities established centres targeted specifically at women or ensured access for women to other community centres. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in partnership with Member States, supported the establishment of women-led multi-purpose community telecentres in rural and remote locations in Benin, Guinea-Bissau, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Those centres provided access to ICT infrastructure and empowered women to play a more active role in the development of their communities. Through this project, women were able to communicate outside their local communities for social or business purposes. In addition to ICT access, the telecentres provided a number of services, including ICT training, e-mail services, word-processing, photocopying and binding. A number of other services have also developed around the telecentres, such as grocery stores, restaurants and tailoring marts, which address specific needs of rural women and their communities.

These activities were expected to improve access to microfinance and opportunities for income generation for the community at large. In partnership with UNIFEM, ITU also supported the establishment of a multimedia ICT centre for handicapped women in Senegal.

63. In Jordan, UNIFEM initiated the "e-village" programme, which consists of centres that provide villagers, women in particular, with opportunities to develop new skills, including the first-ever local community radio station, a film club, an Intel computer clubhouse, a Lego robotics lab, a Microsoft information technology (IT) academy, a printing and packaging centre and a café. UNESCO promoted the concept of community radios and community multimedia centres as a practical way to enable rural communities, including women, to use ICT and media for their own needs, as listeners, producers, managers, decision-makers and representatives of their communities. community multimedia centres combine traditional local media, such as radio, TV and newspapers, with new technologies, such as computers, Internet, CDs, mobile phones, cameras and audio recorders. To date, UNESCO has supported over 130 such centres in more than 25 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.

64. Women's access to existing community ICT centres was also supported. In Jordan, more than 50 per cent of the users of 125 ICT community centres supported by UNDP were rural women. In addition to building IT skills, the centres provide access to credit and legal advice and support income-generating projects.

65. A number of initiatives focused on the income-generating and employment creation potentials of ICT. In collaboration with strategic partners — the Asian Development Bank, ITU, the Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Centre and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Women's E-biz Centre — The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific organized a workshop on entrepreneurship and e-business development for women in the Republic of Korea in 2006. The meeting was aimed at empowering women in rural communities through the promotion of women's entrepreneurship and the use of ICT. It also provided the opportunity for participants to learn about building businesses, entrepreneurial skills and technology and tools for e-business, as well as to develop business plans. An IFAD-supported project in Latin America and the Caribbean helped rural women to sell their products over the Internet. A website provided news and information to help start small businesses and provided useful links for rural microentrepreneurs.

IV. Efforts of the United Nations system to support the empowerment of rural women and meet their specific needs

66. In its resolution 60/138 the General Assembly invited the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular those dealing with issues of development, to address and support the empowerment of rural women and their specific needs in their programmes and strategies, including in the context of globalization. In addition to the measures reported on in preceding sections of the present report, United Nations entities have undertaken a variety of other measures to ensure that the different needs, priorities and contributions of women and men in rural areas are taken fully into account in all areas of work. The

present section provides some examples of initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system.

67. Some entities ensured that the situation of rural women was given explicit attention in their gender equality policies and plans. The FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action (2008-2013), for example, seeks to advance rural women's social and economic status and reduce rural women's and men's vulnerability. The Plan directly supports the Millennium Development Goals and integrates gender equality issues into work related to disaster-related and complex emergencies, bio-energy and climate change, globalization and human, animal and plant diseases.

68. Efforts were also made to ensure that attention was given to rural women in interventions in all policy areas through the gender mainstreaming strategy. Since 2003 the World Bank has implemented a Rural Development Strategy, aimed at integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of rural development as a cross-cutting issue. The Gender and Rural Development Group brings together specialists in many fields to promote the systematic integration of gender concerns in the World Bank's rural activities, consistent with the Bank's "Integrating gender into the World Bank's work: a strategy for action". The World Bank also developed a toolkit for the monitoring and evaluation of rural development projects and guidelines on mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the project cycle.

69. As part of its overall strategy to mainstream age, gender and diversity considerations in its policies, programmes and operations, so that all beneficiaries, including those in rural areas, can benefit equally from all activities, UNHCR developed an "Accountability framework for age, gender and diversity mainstreaming", which is being rolled out in 86 country operations. The framework holds all senior staff accountable for promoting and supporting individual documentation for refugee women; ensuring a 50 per cent participation of women in refugee committees; and setting up mechanisms for follow-up and treatment of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

70. The research and publications of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have regularly addressed the situation of rural women in the context of agricultural and rural development. Recent research on free-trade agreement negotiations analysed the expected consequences for women agricultural workers. All available statistics and indicators collected by ECLAC have been disaggregated by sex and by region (urban and rural).

71. A number of training tools have been developed to support capacity-building for identifying and addressing the situation of rural women. Through the Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme, FAO developed a gender training programme for policymakers and development specialists. The Programme has assisted over 20 countries in developing gender-sensitive national action plans for the agricultural and rural sector. Approximately 4,000 development specialists in over 80 countries have been trained with the socio-economic and gender analysis methodology to integrate gender equality issues in the formulation and implementation of development programmes and projects. The World Bank developed a web-based learning module to provide basic information on gender equality issues in agriculture.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

72. **A wide range of strategies and activities were reported by Member States and United Nations entities in efforts to improve the situation of rural women and support their empowerment, in response to resolution 60/138. Significant efforts were made to support an enabling environment through attention to rural women in gender equality policies and strategies, as well as through specific policies and strategies on rural women and gender equality policies explicitly focused on rural development. Legislative change, targeted activities for rural women, information activities and work on gender statistics also contributed to creating an enabling environment for improving the situation of rural women.**

73. **Considerable efforts were made to integrate the concerns of rural women into policies, strategies, legislation and programmes. However, little information was available on the extent to which women in rural areas were able to participate and influence the design and implementation of such measures. Efforts were made to increase the participation of women in decision-making by supporting their involvement in local-level elections, including through training. Only limited information was available on the impact of these efforts.**

74. **In order to meet the basic needs of rural women, actions were taken to increase social security systems, improve their access to infrastructure and services such as water, energy, transport, education and health care, and address their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and trafficking. Little information was available on the impact of the interventions.**

75. **Given the importance of rural women's right to land and other property for their empowerment, few examples were available on the abolishment of discriminatory laws and practices. The importance of women's access to ICT has been widely recognized, and good-practice examples of activities undertaken by United Nations entities were identified.**

76. **It is critical to increase the visibility and recognition of women's contributions to the social, economic and political development of rural areas. Greater attention should be given to the situation of rural women in policies and programmes focused specifically on gender equality and those focused on rural development.**

77. **Multidimensional approaches that address the complexity of the constraints faced by rural women appear to be more effective than those that are narrowly focused on single issues.**

78. **Training and capacity-building for rural women remain important strategies for their empowerment. Awareness-raising and training on the situation of rural women is, however, also required for policymakers, community leaders and staff in key institutions at different levels, including men as well as women.**

79. **The lack of sex-disaggregated data remains a serious constraint to assessing progress. In addition, monitoring and evaluation methods that combine adequate qualitative indicators with more traditional quantitative**

measures need to be developed to strengthen the assessment of the impact of development programmes and projects on rural women.

80. **Governments, United Nations entities and all other relevant stakeholders should support legislation, policies and programmes that strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in rural areas. Such measures must build on the framework provided by the Beijing Platform for Action and its follow-up, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Specific interventions might include:**

(a) **Ensuring systematic attention to rural women's needs, priorities and contributions in all gender equality policies and action plans, and in rural development policies and programmes, poverty reduction strategies and macroeconomic policies;**

(b) **Promoting consultation with and participation of rural women, including indigenous women, through their organizations and networks, in the design, development and implementation of gender equality and rural development interventions;**

(c) **Integrating increased employment opportunities for rural women into all international and national development strategies and poverty eradication strategies, including by expanding non-agricultural employment opportunities, improving working conditions and increasing access to productive resources;**

(d) **Accelerating the availability of, access to and use of infrastructure, such as energy, transport, water and sanitation, labour-saving technologies and services, such as education and health care;**

(e) **Ensuring increased access to and benefits from ICT for rural women, including in the area of income generation and employment opportunities;**

(f) **Increasing capacity for analysing and addressing the situation of rural women, including through training programmes and the development and dissemination of methodologies and tools;**

(g) **Improving the assessment of the impact of policies and programmes for the benefit of women in rural areas, including through the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data.**

United Nations A/62/203

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Item 66 (a) of the provisional agenda*
New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

New Partnership for Africa's Development: fifth consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The sixty-second session of the General Assembly will mark the mid-point to 2015, the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The present report examines policy actions taken by the international community to meet the commitments made by the Group of Eight countries at their 2005 summit held in Gleneagles, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The report also analyses the extent of international support to help African countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals and implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) projects and programmes. This mid-point to 2015 is a reminder of the unfortunate reality that most African countries are off track in meeting most, if not all, of the Millennium Development Goals. By adopting NEPAD which is built around the Millennium Development Goals, African countries have put the Goals at the centre of their development agenda. While it is widely recognized that free trade is an engine of growth that could lift millions of people out of poverty, there is evidence that increased aid and debt relief are also contributing to the improvement of the living standards of millions of people in African countries. Developed countries should therefore deliver on the historic promises they made at the Gleneagles summit in 2005 and give Africa the opportunity to effectively carry the NEPAD vision forward. To that end, the international community, including the United Nations system, and African countries should broaden and deepen their partnership, while effectively coordinating their actions in line with the development paradigm established by the NEPAD initiative, thus increasing the potential of African

* A/62/150.

07-45107 (E) 270807

countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals. Concretely, development partners should take urgent steps to increase aid flows, improve its quality and make trade work for Africa, including through a successful conclusion of the Doha Round. African countries should advance the NEPAD agenda by effectively implementing its priorities. The option of business as usual should not be an alternative, as it would lead to broken promises and further delay the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of NEPAD.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/229, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a comprehensive report on the implementation of the resolution at its sixty-second session. The present report is submitted in response to that request.

2. The report highlights policy measures and actions taken by African countries and organizations in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the response of the international community and the support of the United Nations system during the past year. The activities undertaken by both the private sector and civil society in support of NEPAD are also discussed in the report. The report benefited from information and data provided by Member States, regional organizations, the NEPAD secretariat and various entities of the United Nations system.

II. Action by African countries and organizations

3. The NEPAD represents a collective vision and a strategic development framework for Africa. The main issue is how this framework can be used to translate ideas into effective concrete action. To a large extent, the move from a framework to an operational blueprint depends on the resolve of each African country and the subsequent steps taken by them. Each country is expected to design its own blueprint, consistent with the NEPAD goals, in order to accelerate growth and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In addition to the role of individual countries in implementing NEPAD, responsibility for carrying out some programmes and projects has been given to designated institutions, including the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa. In addition, the regional economic communities, which are the core institutions for Africa's economic integration, play a leading role in implementing projects at the subregional level.

A. Infrastructure

4. In the last year, progress has been made in implementing the two tracks of the NEPAD infrastructure programme, namely the short-term action plan for infrastructure development and the medium- to long-term strategic framework. In order to interest key energy, investment and other private sector companies in potential electricity infrastructure projects that are waiting for immediate financing, in December 2006 the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa facilitated a meeting of investors and in African power pools. In January 2007, the Consortium held a meeting to discuss strategic issues such as scaling up investment in infrastructure and capacity-building for the regional economic communities. While it was estimated that investment commitments for infrastructure have increased, from $7 billion in 2005 to $7.5 billion in 2006, the Consortium and African stakeholders still need to close the financing gap, estimated at $1.3 billion, for projects that are ready for implementation but lack funds.

5. In an effort to attract potential investors and donors to support the Inga hydroelectric power-generation project, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the support of the African Development Bank and the NEPAD secretariat, organized an international round table in South Africa in October 2006. At that meeting it was decided to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the site, to be financed by the African Development Bank, and to speed up the rehabilitation of Inga I and II and the Westcor electricity interconnector. Progress has been made in the operationalization of the African Energy Commission, the secretariat of which is in the process of establishing a ministerial board and technical advisory bodies. In addition, following ratification of the African Union convention establishing the African Energy Commission, the first meeting of experts to discuss institutional and managerial issues was hosted by the Commission of the African Union in May 2007 in Addis Ababa.

6. In the water sector, the Technical Advisory Committee of the African Ministers' Council on Water met in February 2007 in Nairobi, in preparation for the meeting of the Council to be held in May in Brazzaville. The Technical Advisory Committee used the meeting to engage the cooperation of the European Commission and the African Development Bank with the African Ministers' Council on Water, in particular on strategies to improve the effectiveness of the support provided by the two organizations. In addition, the Governing Council of the African Water Facility approved the Facility's communications and resource mobilization strategies, as well as an operational budget totalling 33 million euros (€) (46 million United States dollars ($)). At the same time, requests received for funding amounted to €44 million ($61 million), showing that there is a high demand for support. In the area of transboundary water resources management, the NEPAD secretariat has secured €10 million ($14 million) for support for improved assessment of African river basins. Proposals to access the funds are being considered by the European Commission. In recognition of capacity-building as an important cross-cutting issue, during its presidency of both the Group of Eight and the European Union, Germany proposed an initiative to strengthen the capacity of the African Union/NEPAD and the regional economic communities to implement regional infrastructure programmes. In support of the initiative, a fund will be set up at the African Development Bank with an initial German contribution of €2 million ($3 million).

7. In addition to the implementation of the short-term action plan for infrastructure development, work is progressing on the medium- to long-term strategic framework. The outputs of the first phase, primarily focusing on measures to accelerate the implementation of the short-term action plan and the determination of infrastructure development gaps, were discussed at four regional workshops held in the first half of 2007. The study on the medium- to long-term strategic framework, which focuses on regional infrastructure needs, is complemented by the African infrastructure country diagnostics study, which examines infrastructure needs at the country level. Both studies are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2007.

B. Agriculture

8. Over the past year, progress was made in translating the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme framework into specific actions at both the country and regional levels. Following the adoption of the Abuja Declaration on

Fertilizer for an African Green Revolution at the Africa Fertilizer Summit held in June 2006 in Abuja, the NEPAD secretariat and the Commission of the African Union were commissioned to set up a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Abuja Declaration and to submit regular progress reports to the African Union Summit. The African Development Bank has finalized the draft legal instrument for the establishment of the African Fertilizer Development Financing Mechanism, outlining its proposed governance mechanism, eligibility criteria and operational procedures. Nigeria has provided $10 million for the mechanism.

9. In March 2007, to contribute to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme framework, a meeting on "Biotechnology, crop production and seed systems" was organized by the Rockefeller Foundation in Mozambique, at which the components of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, a strategic partnership between the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation launched in September 2006, were presented. The purpose of the Alliance is to contribute to ongoing efforts to bring about a green revolution in Africa.

10. In December 2006, the Commission of the African Union convened the Abuja Food Security Summit, at which a number of decisions were taken to accelerate the achievement of the objective of food and nutrition security in Africa. The major outcomes of the summit were: (a) the commitment to expanding markets, with particular attention to Africa's own demand and to promoting inter-African trade in staple foods; (b) the commitment to ensure systematic integration of nutrition considerations into agricultural and food security; (c) the commitment to establish a system for selecting and prioritizing key decisions of the relevant AU/NEPAD summits; (d) the commitment to identify successes in African agriculture and to share positive experiences with a view to their adaptation, replication and expansion. In May 2007, the Commission of the African Union convened a post-Abuja meeting of the Food Security Summit's International Technical Committee in Ethiopia to discuss how to implement various relevant decisions. Stakeholders are expected to assist in guiding continental, regional and national implementation of the decisions taken at the Summit in 2006.

11. In March 2007, in Rwanda, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa organized the first country round table of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme at which the Rwanda compact of the programme, representing a mutual commitment between Rwanda, the Commission of the African Union, the Common Market and development partners, was signed. The round table facilitated the undertaking of a comprehensive study to define national targets for the programme, the delineation of national policy challenges and support from ministries of finance and donors at the country level. The road map for the programme for Rwanda and its financial requirements has been defined and the Government of Rwanda has committed itself to increasing its budgetary support to the agricultural sector.

12. In order to accelerate the implementation of the fisheries action plan, the NEPAD secretariat, in partnership with the Commission of the African Union, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa and the WorldFish Centre, has launched NEPAD-Fish, a regional programme for investment in research and capacity-building, aimed at increasing and guiding investments by private industry, the public

sector and civil society towards sustainable development of fisheries. In line with the NEPAD action plan, NEPAD-Fish has developed an action plan for the implementation of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Fisheries. A donor meeting was held in Norway in April 2007 to discuss the modalities of assistance to be provided by the Nordic countries. In addition, NEPAD and the WorldFish Centre have developed a collaborative programme to enhance the contribution of fish and fisheries in the development process. In particular, the programme will build a strategic response to HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector that will benefit vulnerable groups. The programme will cover the following countries: Benin, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The Swedish International Development Agency has provided $4.2 million to support the programme.

C. Health

13. In the past year some progress was made in advancing the African Union/NEPAD health strategy. In particular, the NEPAD secretariat collaborated with the Commission of the African Union in preparing the African Health Strategy 2007-2015, which was presented to the African Union Conference of Health Ministers, held in April 2007.

14. In order to promote the development of the "human resources for health" agenda and foster support for the district health development strategy, the NEPAD secretariat has continued close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), in particular with its regional office for Africa in Brazzaville. The focus has been on strengthening health systems in Africa and, including addressing the human resources for health crisis through the Global Health Workforce Alliance and the African platform on human resources for health. The strengthening of health systems in Africa had led to the establishment of the Africa Health Workforce Observatory at the WHO regional office in Brazzaville. Collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), particularly with its office for Southern and East Africa, has continued. A meeting of regional stakeholders has led to a clear enunciation of roles of the African Union, NEPAD, the regional economic communities and United Nations agencies. One of the critical obstacles to effective health system performance is weak mid-level management capacity. To tackle this issue, the NEPAD secretariat has facilitated the delivery of two courses for district health managers from SADC member countries and will continue to offer such training annually with the aim of providing access to these courses to the rest of the continent.

D. Education

15. Over the past year there has been progress in the implementation of various educational projects. For the "mathematics, science and technology education" project, the Government of Malaysia has agreed to train teachers in mathematics and science in five English speaking countries: Liberia, Malawi, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. Thus far, four African countries have committed themselves to providing financial support to the teachers selected to attend the training programme in Malaysia. Regarding the Regional Centre for

Education in Science and Mathematics, a request has been made to the Government of Malaysia that it extend its support for a period of five years.

16. For the New Partnership for Africa's Development Centres of Excellence project, the Development Bank of Southern Africa/Knowledge Management Africa and the NEPAD secretariat have agreed on a partnership to develop a conceptual framework and criteria for the establishment of African Centres of Excellence. In particular, the Development Bank of Southern Africa has pledged 1 million South African rand ($150,000) to finance the design of the underlying framework of the centres. The second phase of the project will include raising additional funding to secure the financial sustainability of each centre.

17. Funding for the "human resource development, training of nurses and midwives in Africa" project was provided by the Government of China. Phase one of the project includes the training of nurses and midwives in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania in public health, including epidemiology and health system research. The project focuses on both the postgraduate and undergraduate levels. In this regard a memorandum of understanding between the NEPAD secretariat and the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa has been finalized. A progress report on the achievements in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania has been produced. Phase two of the project, which is expected to take place in the near future, will include studies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Rwanda. For the "teacher training and teacher development through open and distance learning in Africa" project, the African Capacity-Building Foundation has agreed to support the project in countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

18. With the objective of achieving the "Education for All" goals by 2015, the NEPAD secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are jointly planning to organize a forum for all key stakeholders working on development. The purpose of the forum would be to discuss various ongoing teacher-related initiatives and to provide the opportunity for all stakeholders to work towards harmonizing their support.

E. Environment

19. To promote regional cooperation in policy development and planning for the environment and natural resource management, the NEPAD secretariat, in collaboration with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has organized expert and ministerial meetings to finalize and adopt subregional environmental action plans for each of four subregions: Eastern, Central, North and Southern Africa. In addition, the secretariat's capacity-building project has facilitated and coordinated an inclusive regional dialogue for the development of the subregional environmental action plans. The documentation for the action plans provides a framework advocating strategic priorities, enabling conditions and delivery mechanisms. The project has greatly contributed to strengthening capacity in the subregion for institutional collaboration and implementation.

20. To reinforce the capacity of the regional economic communities, the NEPAD secretariat has contributed to the recruitment of numerous senior environmental experts. These experts are in charge of the implementation of the NEPAD

environment programme at the community level, which includes integrating the environmental dimension into the development programmes of the respective regional economic communities. The implementation of the "climate change adaptation in Africa" research and capacity-building programme, supported by the NEPAD secretariat, is financed by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and the Canadian International Development Research Centre. The programme has just entered the implementation phase, with 12 projects addressing various capacity-development issues relating to climate change.

F. Information and communications technology

21. During the last 12 months, progress has been made in laying the necessary foundations for the implementation of various components of the NEPAD e-schools initiatives, including the e-schools demonstration project and the e-schools business plan. The e-schools demonstration project is a central element in the implementation of the e-school initiative. Official launches of e-schools take place in a regular basis: Rwanda in October 2006; Egypt in February 2007; and South Africa in April 2007. There are now seven countries involved with the NEPAD e-schools demonstration projects, as Lesotho, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda have already launched such projects. The e-Commission for Africa is currently reviewing the draft of NEPAD e-schools business plan prepared by the accounting firm of Ernst and Young in coordination with national experts, the regional economic communities and the African Development Bank. A workshop of stakeholders intended to endorse the business plan is scheduled for July 2007. One of the objectives of the NEPAD e-schools initiative is to ensure that those participating in the project are health literate. To that end, the Medical Research Council of South Africa is providing assistance with regard to the development and application of the "health point" concept. The e-Commission for Africa has secured funding from the African Development Bank to sponsor the work of a consultant to define the nature of the health point, concept, terms of reference for which were completed in March 2007.

22. Progress on the NEPAD information and communications technology (ICT) broadband infrastructure network for Eastern and Southern Africa led to the signature of the Kigali Protocol in November 2006. Twelve countries have signed the Protocol: Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The objectives of the Protocol include open access and affordable prices for high quality, high-speed and reliable electronic communications for end-users. To help realize this objective, the first meeting of the interim Intergovernmental Assembly, composed of the 12 signatory countries, was held in December 2006 in South Africa. In particular, the interim Assembly authorized the e-Commission for Africa to coordinate requests for funding a study of the submarine segment of the NEPAD infrastructure network. Similar broadband infrastructure initiatives for Central, West and North Africa are in the early stages of development.

23. Under the auspices of the NEPAD e-Commission for Africa, African youth have developed the NEPAD e-Commission for Africa youth programme. Terms of reference of the Youth Programme and a three-year programme (2006-09) have been developed. Representatives of African youth who worked on the programmes are from: Botswana, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia.

G. Science and technology

24. In the area of science and technology, progress is being made, particularly in the fields of biotechnology and biosciences and in the establishment of centres of excellence. The high-level African Panel on Biotechnology has completed its interim report on biotechnology and biosafety. The report was endorsed at the conference of the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology in Cairo in November 2006. At the same forum, an interministerial dialogue between ministers of science and technology and ministers of water led to an agreement on criteria and guidelines for establishing an African network of centres of excellence dedicated to water sciences and the development of technology. A task force has been established to identify leading institutions that will constitute the network. The Government of France has provided €180,000 ($250,000) to support this initiative. In addition, partnerships are envisaged with European countries through the African Caribbean Pacific-European Union water facility.

25. The African biosciences initiative has registered further progress in its implementation. Four regional hubs for the biosciences have been established as follows: West Africa (based in Senegal); North Africa (based in Egypt); East and Central Africa (based in Nairobi); and Southern Africa (based in South Africa). The Canadian International Development Agency has contributed 30 million Canadian dollars ($28 million) to support activities of the NEPAD biosciences initiative, while the Government of Finland has pledged a grant of €3 million ($4 million) to support such activities in Southern Africa.

26. In the area of health research and technology, the NEPAD secretariat has commissioned 10 studies and assessments to identify specific priorities to enhance the procurement of health products and technologies and to strengthen research to improve public health in Africa. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has provided $600,000 for the initiative. The studies will be presented at a round table in January 2008 in Addis Ababa. With the collaboration of the NEPAD secretariat and the support of various partners, the Commission of the African Union has finalized Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action.

H. Gender mainstreaming and civil society involvement

27. During the past year, the NEPAD secretariat has been developing a gender mainstreaming toolkit for NEPAD, the regional economic communities and the African Union organs. After reviewing and customizing the existing gender mainstreaming tools to suit their needs, a technical workshop of the NEPAD gender task force was convened in September 2006 in Cairo, to peer review the draft tools. The tools were subsequently further upgraded and refined in preparation for the second validation workshop, which is scheduled to take place in the second half of 2007. The NEPAD secretariat also provided technical support to the African Union, the regional economic communities and the gender directorates and committees of the Pan-African Parliament. In this context, support was provided to the gender and culture panel of the first pan-cultural conference of the African Union, the Union's

knowledge Fair and Consultative Meeting on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming, and the summit on gender held in June 2006 in Banjul in advance of the seventh African Union summit.

28. In order to enhance its position in the Africa Partnership Forum and the 2007 Group of Eight summit processes, the NEPAD secretariat spearheaded efforts to mobilize the participation of Africa-wide civil society organizations. As a result, civil society organizations contributed to the preparation of papers in six priority areas identified by the Chair of the Group of Eight, and the Africa Partnership Forum, namely: trade and investment; gender; climate change; governance/African Peer Review Mechanism; HIV/AIDS; and peace and security. The papers were discussed at the Africa-wide workshop of civil society organizations, the Group of Eight and the Africa Partnership Forum held in April 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa, and presented to both the Government of Germany and the co-chairs of the eighth Africa Partnership Forum in April and May 2007, respectively.

I. African Peer Review Mechanism

29. Despite various challenges, including inadequate financial and institutional capacity to move the African Peer Review Mechanism process forward, some progress has been achieved over the last year. As of June 2007, 26 countries have voluntarily acceded to the Review Mechanism: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Taken together these countries account for about 75 per cent of the total population of the continent. South Africa and Algeria have completed the process and the country review reports of both countries were submitted to the African Peer Review Forum in July 2007.

30. In response to various concerns about the slow progress of the process, the activities of the African Peer Review Mechanism have been increasingly focused on advancing country processes and reviews. To that end, the 2007 work plan of the Review Mechanism is preparing the implementation of various substantive activities critical for its successful implementation. These include: (a) advance missions in five countries: Angola, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon; (b) follow-up missions to six countries: Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania; (c) support missions to four countries: Malawi, Mali, Sierra Leone and Zambia; (d) review missions to four countries: Benin, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda; and (e) post-review missions to three countries: Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda. Furthermore, following the recommendations of the sixth Africa Governance Forum held in Kigali in May 2006, the 2007 work plan envisages the implementation of additional activities, including the facilitation of peer learning workshops, the establishment of appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks and the improvement of Review Mechanism institutions and processes.

31. For countries that have already undergone the process, the main challenge is how to institutionalize the national dialogue and consultation processes around key governance issues generated by the African Peer Review Mechanism and to

implement the projects and programmes identified in national programmes of action, including mainstreaming them into other national development processes.

32. At the country level, the African Peer Review Mechanism is funded by participating African member States. As of end-December 2006, the total financial contributions received from member States stood at $8.8 million, accounting for 62 per cent of the total contributions to the Review Mechanism since its inception. Bilateral and multilateral development partners have contributed the remaining 38 per cent. The non-African contribution came from the Governments of Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom and from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Strategic partners, including the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa, have been funding their participation in both country review and country support missions. Adequate funding is fundamental to the sustainability and independence of the process. By fulfilling their financial obligations to the Review Mechanism, participating countries are consolidating and taking full ownership of the process.

III. Response of the international community

A. Building on the momentum of international support for Africa's development

33. At the present time, when there is evidence that more aid and debt relief to Africa are making an impact in improving the lives of millions of people, the engagement of the member countries of the Group of Eight with Africa appears to be falling short. For the first time since 1997, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), total official development assistance (ODA) to Africa provided by the Development Assistance Committee (excluding debt relief to Nigeria) declined in real terms in 2005 and stalled in 2006. If present trends continue, the Group of Eight countries will not be on track to meet their commitment of doubling aid to Africa by 2010. Moreover, only limited progress has been achieved in trade liberalization of relevance to African exports.

34. Against this background, a number of international actions and pledges with the potential to contribute to the implementation of NEPAD were initiated last year. Sweden has elaborated a plan to make better use of trade as a tool for development and, in line with the implementation of the Aid for Trade initiative, has become one of the main contributors to trade-related activities in support of Africa.

35. As part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, the Government of the Russian Federation pledged to cancel over $540 million in bilateral debt in 2007 and, in addition, is about to disburse about $0.2 million to the Trust Fund for the African Peer Review Mechanism.

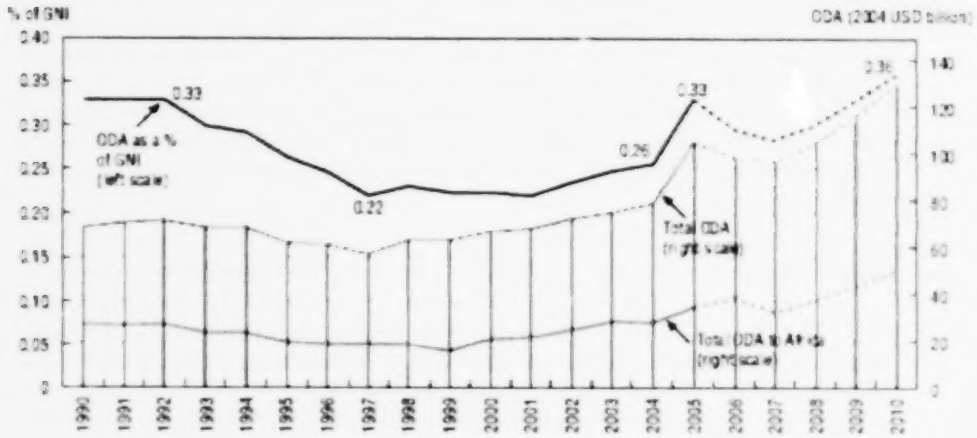
36. At the 2007 Heiligendamm summit, the Group of Eight countries pledged to dedicate $30 billion to the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in Africa, with the United States Government committing to provide half of that amount.

B. Official development assistance

37. According to OECD, total ODA globally from members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee fell by 5.1 per cent, to $103.9 billion in 2006 (see figure below). Even excluding one-off debt relief to Iraq and Nigeria, which made the 2005 total exceptionally high, overall assistance fell by 1.8 per cent. As debt relief for Nigeria and Iraq is phasing out, there is the concern that ODA may further decline in 2007.

Figure

Net official development assistance from members of the Development Assistance Committee 1990-2005 and simulations of net official development assistance to 2010 by the Development Assistance Committee secretariat



Source: OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2007.

38. Against this background, two years after the 2005 Gleneagles summit, meeting the commitments made by the Group of Eight countries to double aid to Africa by 2010 is becoming an increasing challenge. Excluding Nigeria's debt relief, ODA declined by around 1 per cent in real terms in 2005. According to preliminary data from OECD, excluding debt relief for Nigeria, aid to sub-Saharan Africa from members of the Development Assistance Committee increased by only 2 per cent in 2006.

39. To meet their commitments for the period from 2004 to 2006, the Group of Eight countries should have increased their ODA by $5.4 billion. In fact, they increased it by only $2.3 billion. Moreover, the increasing concentration of aid among a limited number of countries implies that aid to most sub-Saharan African countries was either constant or increased at a very slow pace. Recently, however, despite the slow pace of granting more aid to Africa, there seems to be some positive indication of an increase in aid in the future. For example, following the 2007 Heiligendamm summit, the Group of Eight countries committed themselves (without providing any timetable) to redeeming the aid pledges they made at the Gleneagles summit.

40. Subsequent to the adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in March 2005, the following actions have been taken by donors to change aid practices. In 2006, indicators of donor harmonization and alignment were collected and monitored for the first time. Since governance is crucial to ensure aid effectiveness, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank proposed a framework to monitor governance, including indicators. Developing countries, donors and international financial institutions then began adapting parts of the framework to improve practices. In particular, 16 members of the Development Assistance Committee adopted an action plan for implementing the Paris Declaration. An additional three members have adopted the principles of harmonization and alignment in their aid strategies and policies. In the area of broad dissemination within donor development agencies, a majority of members of the Development Assistance Committee have provided training courses on the commitments under the Paris Declaration. Some agencies have also provided staff training on budget support, sector-wide approaches and public financial management. The third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, to be held in September 2008 in Accra, will present an opportunity to assess progress made on and next steps regarding the Paris Declaration, for which it will constitute a milestone. In addition, at the 2007 Group of Eight summit, the importance of the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the monitoring of its progress was emphasized.

C. Debt relief

41. Over the past year there has been some progress in extending and deepening debt relief through the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, the HIPC Initiative and bilateral debt relief initiatives. In addition, the Group of Eight countries are expected to meet their commitments on debt relief made at the Gleneagles summit. Three African countries reached the completion point of the HIPC Initiative in the past 12 months: Malawi in September 2006, Sierra Leone in December 2006 and Sao Tome and Principe in March 2007. Thus, as of July 2007, 18 African countries have reached the completion point under the HIPC Initiative and are thus benefiting through the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, as of July 2007, the following seven African countries were receiving interim relief through the HIPC Initiative as they were paying significantly reduced debt services: Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. These seven countries have already reached the decision point and are expected to reach the completion point within the next two years. Once they reach the completion point under the HIPC Initiative they will automatically qualify for debt relief under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

42. Eight African countries met the income and indebtedness criteria based on data from the end of 2004 and may be considered for debt relief under the HIPC Initiative (see table below). According to the 2007 Debt, AIDS Trade Africa report, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and the HIPC Initiative combined are currently providing approximately $70 billion in debt relief to African countries, saving them an average of almost $2 billion a year in debt servicing costs.

According to the World Bank *Global Monitoring Report 2006*, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative would leave post-completion-point African heavily indebted poor countries with an average debt/exports ratio of about 45 per cent (as compared with the debt sustainability threshold of 150 per cent under the enhanced HIPC Initiative).

Table
Current and potential beneficiaries of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative

Status	*Countries*
Post-completion-point countries that have benefited from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative as of end-April 2007 (18)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
Post-decision-point countries (7)	Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau
Pre-decision-point countries (8)	Central African Republic, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Togo

Source: IMF, 2007.

43. The Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative will not be fully successful unless donor countries adequately offset the lost debt repayments to the International Development Association and the African Development Fund, thus maintaining their capacity to issue new grants and affordable loans. As of May 2007, the donor countries had made firm commitments for less than half of the additional $10 billion needed by the International Development Association and the African Development Fund from 2006 to 2016. This problem requires urgent attention.

44. The Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and the HIPC Initiative have been complemented by bilateral debt relief granted by the Group of Eight countries and other donor countries. The Paris Club creditors have granted additional debt relief beyond the HIPC Initiative to selected heavily indebted poor countries in Africa. In October 2006, they granted bilateral debt relief of $217 million to Malawi, which resulted in a significant reduction of Malawi's debt to the Paris Club. The Club creditors also granted debt relief to Sierra Leone in January 2007 ($22 million) and to Sao Tome and Principe in May 2007, entirely cancelling the debt of these two countries to the creditors.[1]

45. In addition, at the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held in November 2006, China announced the cancellation of all debt in the form of interest-free Government loans that matured at the end of 2005 owed by African heavily indebted poor countries and least developed countries that have diplomatic relations with it. Through the Canadian debt initiative and bilateral participation in the HIPC Initiative, as of 2006 Canada had also provided over $927 million in

[1] See Paris Club website: http://www.clubdeparis.org.

bilateral debt relief to African heavily indebted poor countries. The countries that have received or are about to receive full cancellation of their bilateral debt to Canada are: Benin, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Rwanda, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Debt negotiations between Poland and Angola led to a 60 per cent reduction (amounting to about $91.86 million) in the total debt owed by Angola to Poland.

D. Foreign direct investment

46. In 2005, the year for which the latest data is available from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa reached an unprecedented level of $31 billion, compared with $17 billion in 2004. Despite this record high and near doubling of inflows, Africa's share in global FDI remained low, at about 3 per cent. This low share reflects slow progress in increasing productive capacity and diversification, developing the regional market and in the formation of a highly skilled labour force.

47. While the recent high level of FDI inflows is mainly due to a boom in the global commodity market, which generated substantial inflows into the primary sector, the service sector also registered an increase in investment inflows. Similar to past trends, FDI inflows remained concentrated in a few countries and industries. Five countries (Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, South Africa and the Sudan) represented about 66 per cent of the inflows to the continent. The countries that received the least FDI were mostly least developed countries, many of which have limited natural resources, lack the capacity to engage in significant manufacturing and have been unable to integrate into the global economy.

48. In 2005, FDI inflows increased in 34 African countries and declined in 19 other. South Africa registered the largest inflows, with a substantial increase from only $0.8 billion in 2004 to $6.4 billion in 2005. This was mainly due to the acquisition of Amalgamated Bank of South Africa by Barclays Bank (United Kingdom) for $5 billion. While the main source countries of FDI inflows to Africa remained the same, investment from China and other Asian countries increased substantially, especially in the oil and telecommunications industries. In an effort to attract more FDI, many African countries have recently adopted business-friendly regulatory frameworks and policies at the regional, national and bilateral levels.

49. Since its establishment in 2006, the donor community's commitment to the Investment Climate Facility for Africa has increased from $80 million to about $120 million. Several multinational companies, including Microsoft, Standard Bank, Celtel (an African telecommunications provider) and Sasol, have committed themselves to contributing to the Facility. The Facility has established well-defined project selection criteria and set eight indicators against which it will evaluate its performance. In collaboration with the NEPAD secretariat, the Facility is finalizing its strategic framework and workplan for the next two years.

E. Trade

50. There is doubt whether the Doha Round will be brought to a successful conclusion this year. Little progress has been made in finding an agreement on

issues affecting Africa, including agricultural market access and greater reduction in trade-distorting agricultural subsidies.

51. Notwithstanding delays in the Doha trade negotiations, further progress has been made on the Aid for Trade initiative. International support for trade-related assistance continues to intensify, with a special focus on establishing a framework to improve the coordination and effectiveness of the Aid for Trade initiative. Since this aid is widely viewed as an essential complement and not a substitute for a successful Doha Development Agenda, the main segments of this new architecture were implemented under the leadership of the World Trade Organization. A task force established by the World Trade Organization on the Aid for Trade initiative recommended a series of proposals to improve monitoring and evaluation, including the establishment of a monitoring entity, and an annual discussion on the initiative at the organization's General Council. While donors have committed themselves to providing substantial increases under the initiative, they have not provided any specifics on the magnitude of the increase, the timetable or the mechanism by which aid will be disbursed. For their part, African countries have been very active in articulating their positions on the initiative, requesting, in particular, assistance in meeting sanitary and technical standards and the cost of implementing other agreements of the World Trade Organization, in strengthening their negotiating capacities and in improving their chances of acceding to the World Trade Organization.

52. Negotiations on the economic partnership agreements between the European Union and African countries are well under way. The objective of the negotiations is to replace non-conforming trade preferences for Africa with agreements compatible with World Trade Organization agreements by the end of 2007. These agreements pose socio-economic challenges for African countries, which are expected to open their markets to imports from the European Union in return for the extension of preferential access. At the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa in April 2007, ministers called on the European Union to make additional resources available to meet the adjustment and other associated costs.

53. In December 2006, the United States extended the "third country fabric" provision of the African Growth and Opportunity Act to 2012. The provision allows African apparel factories to use the most cost-effective fabric in producing clothing to be sold within the United States market. At the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held in November 2006, the Chinese Government announced a further opening up of China's domestic market to Africa through an increase in the number of imported items with a special preferential tariff from the least developed African countries from 190 to more than 440.

F. South-South cooperation

54. South-South cooperation is gaining in importance as a complement to North-South partnerships. Specifically, significant South-South cooperation has expanded between China and Africa. In November 2006, the summit and the third ministerial conference of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation was held in Beijing. At the summit, China pledged $3 billion in preferential loans and $2 billion in export credits for African countries over the next three years. In order to encourage and

support Chinese business in Africa, the China-Africa Development Fund, with a total capital of $5 billion, has been established. To chart the course for China-Africa cooperation, the two sides also adopted Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009), which sets forth a framework for the strengthened aid and trade relationships between China and African countries. Furthermore, in cooperation with UNDP, the China-Africa Business Council has been established in Beijing to enhance economic and trade relations and cooperation.

55. In addition, countries like Brazil and India have become much more economically active in Africa, including by providing technical assistance. For example, in India, which is planning the first summit-level meeting with the 53 member States of the African Union in the second half of 2007, work is under way to implement the country's initiative for a connectivity mission to support areas such as tele-education across the continent. The formation of the India-Brazil-South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation also warrants particular attention as an important triangular alliance.

56. Recently, bilateral links between African and South American countries have been expanding. Against this background, the first Africa-South America Summit to Advance South-South Cooperation was held in November 2006 in Abuja. At the summit, pledges of cooperation in a number of economic sectors and in the area of peace and security were made. It was also agreed that the Africa-South America Summit would be held every two years, alternating between Africa and South America.

57. Japan continues to place emphasis on the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process as a cornerstone of cooperation between African countries and Japan. The fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which will be held in May 2008, before the Group of Eight summit in Japan, is intended to raise awareness of the challenges facing Africa. An African ministerial meeting on energy and environment was also held in early 2007 in Kenya, aiming to address the issues of lack of access to energy and environmental degradation in Africa. Japan also supports the Technonet Africa project through the Japan-UNDP partnership fund. The project is aimed at promoting the development of a network of small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa and attracting FDI. Building on the momentum of the "Korea Initiative for Africa's Development", which contains plans for comprehensive support for African countries, the Republic of Korea plans to expand aid in medicine, health services, information technology and human resource development, in addition to its plan to triple ODA to Africa by 2008.

IV. Support by the United Nations system

58. The United Nations system remains an important pillar of international support for Africa, including for the implementation of NEPAD and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The system's diverse support for NEPAD ranges from advocacy and institutional support to practical assistance for the implementation of NEPAD programmes and projects. The nature and scope of the support provided by the United Nations system in the past 12 months has been analysed in the report of the Secretary-General to the Committee on Programme and

Coordination on the United Nations system support for NEPAD.[2] The main message of that report is that over the past year progress has been made in two important areas: enhanced collaboration between the United Nations system and the Commission of the African Union; and strengthening of the cluster system under which the support of the United Nations system to the implementation of NEPAD is organized. Furthermore, the report details many specific initiatives by United Nations organizations and programmes in support of NEPAD.

59. The declaration on "Enhancing United Nations-African Union Cooperation", signed by the United Nations and the Commission of the African Union in November 2006 has provided a framework for stronger and more effective cooperation. A 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union is also being developed by the Organization through wide-ranging consultations involving several entities of the United Nations system and the Commission of the Union.

60. In addition, the seventh regional consultation meeting of United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa, held in November 2006 in Addis Ababa, reflected a renewed commitment by the United Nations system to provide focused and coordinated support to the African Union and NEPAD. The discussions and recommendations of the meeting focused on the following five key policy issues: strengthening regional coordination and the cluster system; fostering coordination and integration of United Nations activities at the subregional level; improving United Nations relationships with continental and subregional organizations; monitoring the effectiveness of United Nations interventions in coordinating support to the African Union/NEPAD; and enhancing capacity and mobilizing resources to implement recommendations and improve inter-agency collaboration to support the African Union/NEPAD.

61. With the aim of increasing synergies and improving collaboration between United Nations agencies, the regional consultation meeting created new thematic clusters by dividing two of the existing ones. The governance, peace and security cluster was divided into a governance cluster and a peace and security cluster; and the agriculture, trade and market access cluster was split into a cluster for agriculture, food security and rural development and a cluster for industry, trade and market access. The terms of reference of the latter were adopted at the inaugural meeting co-organized in May 2007 in Vienna by the Economic Commission for Africa and the cluster's convener, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

62. At the regional consultation meeting it was also agreed that all clusters should undertake a clear alignment of programmes and resources with the priorities of the African Union and NEPAD. In response to the demands of the new United Nations-African Union cooperation framework, the regional consultation mechanism of United Nations organizations and agencies working in Africa has been expanded to include the Commission of the African Union. The meeting also recommended that the United Nations system should maintain regular consultations with the Commission.

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[2] E/AC.51/2007/4.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

63. **In the past year, Africa's development partners have made progress in delivering on their promise to cancel the multilateral debt of qualified African countries. However, lack of progress in the Doha Round of multilateral trade talks remains a major problem. The international community needs to make dramatic progress on its pledges, while African countries should continue to take steps to effectively implement the many NEPAD projects and programmes they have already adopted.**

64. **Member countries of the Group of Eight should take urgent and collective action to substantially increase their aid, in order to deliver on their commitments of doubling assistance to Africa by 2010. They should also design a series of innovative financing arrangements to make up for any shortfalls in core budgetary provisions. With the rise of new aid sources and the subsequent proliferation of aid channels, there is a need for the international community to develop a new aid architecture, based on closer coordination with aid activities among the wider donor community, greater harmonization, less fragmentation and better allocation of aid, as envisaged in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.**

65. **The international community should also ensure that multilateral trade agreements, including the final Doha Round, prioritize Africa's needs and incorporate appropriate developmental provisions. Lack of progress in negotiations on issues of interest to Africa is a serious concern.**

66. **The Aid for Trade initiative is expected to assist African countries in implementing various trade arrangements, including the Doha Round and the economic partnership agreements, by addressing the many constraints that they face. In this regard, efforts should be made to ensure that the initiative is well formulated, adequately funded, efficiently managed and effectively implemented as quickly as possible. Resources granted to the initiative should be additional, predictable, adequate and sustainable. These new and additional resources should finance new, not recycled or existing, technical assistance and projects.**

67. **While the United Nations system has taken important steps towards providing increasingly focused and coordinated support to the African Union and NEPAD, it is important to further strengthen the clusters and the regional consultation mechanism by organizing more frequent and regular meetings, particularly at the senior level, in order to further enhance coordination and joint programming. At the same time, the United Nations system should place increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluating the impact of its activities in support of the African Union and NEPAD.**

68. **African Governments need to continue prudent borrowing policies and to further strengthen their capacity to monitor and manage their debt. They should also be vigilant about loan conditions, such as mortgaging future exports earnings for repayments.**

69. **With an unprecedented amount of debt relief and promises of increased development aid, African Governments should further strengthen their public finance management practices in order to ensure that the freed-up resources**

are used to effectively support their efforts to implement NEPAD and to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

70. **Six years after the adoption of NEPAD, African countries should further enhance public awareness and commitment to NEPAD and its programmes through, inter alia, effective and comprehensive communications and outreach strategies.**

United Nations

A/62/204

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 August 2007

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Item 66 (b) of the provisional agenda*
New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support: causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Progress report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report addresses the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318). It is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 61/230 of 22 December 2006, which was adopted following the Assembly's consideration at its sixty-first session of the Secretary-General's progress report dated 2 August 2006 (A/61/213).

Section I of the report provides a brief overview of major political, social and economic developments in Africa since 1998. The section underlines the significant progress made in peace and security, and to some extent development. In section II, the report describes recent progress made by the United Nations system during the past year, focusing particularly on post-conflict peacebuilding activities and on the need to strengthen the capacity of African organizations.

* A/62/150.

07-45101 (E) 290807

In accordance with resolution 61/230, the report also includes several proposals for United Nations actions in support of the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010. The report concludes that after a decade of achievements and challenges, there is a strong case for a full review of commitments made, progress achieved and lessons learned in preventing conflict and promoting peace and development in Africa, and proposes a comprehensive review of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report.

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I. A decade of achievements and challenges

1. On 25 September 1997, the Security Council convened at the level of foreign ministers to consider the need for a concerted international effort to promote peace and security in Africa. In the presidential statement issued that day (S/PRST/1997/46), the Council observed that despite the progress achieved by some African States, the number and intensity of armed conflicts on the continent remained a matter of grave concern, requiring a determined response. In response to the request made by the Council in its presidential statement, I undertook a comprehensive analysis and submitted, in 1998, a report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2. In my report, I called upon African leaders and the international community to summon the necessary political will to produce positive change in the continent. In particular, I called upon Africa to demonstrate the will to rely upon political rather than military responses to problems; to take good governance seriously, ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening democratization and promoting transparency and capability in public administration; and to enact and adhere to the various reforms needed to promote economic growth. I also urged the international community to summon the political will to intervene where it could have an impact, and to invest where resources were needed.

3. To channel these efforts, I proposed a set of far-reaching recommendations designed to significantly reduce political tensions and violence within and between African States. The progress reports that I have issued since 2000 illustrate that some of these recommendations have been translated into action, although others have not yet achieved the results envisaged.

4. Indeed, despite remarkable achievements in implementing some of the 1998 recommendations, the basic conditions required for sustained peace and development have yet to be adequately consolidated throughout the continent. Serious impediments to peace consolidation and development, including pervasive extreme poverty, weakness of State institutions, poor management of natural resources, failure to protect fundamental human rights and increased threats related to climate change, still loom large.

A. Responding to situations of conflict

5. Africa today is afflicted by far fewer armed conflicts than it was a decade ago, but even so, one fifth of the population of the continent still lives in areas affected by conflict. In 1998, when I issued my report on the causes of conflict in Africa, there were 14 countries in the midst of war and another 11 were suffering from severe political turbulence. Today, while conflicts in Somalia and in the Darfur region of the Sudan are high on the international agenda, others such as the North-South war in the Sudan and civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia as well as the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have been resolved, and many other conflicts are in the course of being settled.

6. In my 1998 report I recommended, among other measures, that the international community consider the appointment of special mediators or commissions, improve the effectiveness of sanctions, stop the proliferation of small

arms, co-deploy multinational peacekeeping forces with regional and subregional forces and strengthen Africa's own capacity for peacekeeping. Some of these measures have been implemented and have contributed significantly to reducing the number and intensity of conflicts in Africa.

7. In fact, the improved effectiveness and readiness of the international community, including African countries themselves, to respond to conflict through peacekeeping has been a major factor in containing violent conflict. There are currently 13 United Nations peacekeeping operations, special political missions and peacebuilding support offices in Africa. Over the last decade, United Nations peacekeeping operations have grown in complexity and now deal with much broader mandates which include, inter alia, human rights, gender and child protection, State administration, recovery, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, the rule of law, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform.

8. Much of the credit for the improvement of the security situation rests, however, with Africa. In 2002, the Organization of African Unity was succeeded by a fundamentally redesigned, more effective and more proactive African Union. Within a few years, the African Union has made significant progress in elaborating the African Peace and Security Architecture, which consists of instruments, institutions and processes to anticipate, prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The African Peace and Security Architecture comprises, inter alia, the African Union Peace and Security Council, a Panel of the Wise, a continental early warning system and the beginnings of an African standby force. The conflict management mechanisms of regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community, which provide additional capacity for peace and security, are important building blocks of this architecture. The African Union, various subregional organizations and a number of Governments have become more active in mobilizing military forces for peacekeeping missions and in defusing political crises before they escalate into large-scale violence.

9. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has been strengthened through the signing of the Declaration on cooperation in November 2006 between the two organizations. Efforts are under way to prepare a 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, which envisages, inter alia, enhanced cooperation in all phases of conflict management; early warning and preventive diplomacy; peacemaking; peacekeeping; post-conflict reconstruction; and peacebuilding and human rights. The United Nations and the African Union have, since 2004, strengthened cooperation in the context of crises such as those in Darfur and Cote d'Ivoire, and redefined the scope and content of the collaborative conflict management partnership.

10. Cooperation has also yielded positive results at the regional level. For example, in November 2004, the first International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, organized under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, adopted the Dar es Salaam Declaration of Principles on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is now supporting the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region signed in December 2006 as

well as providing capacity and institutional support to the new Great Lakes Conference secretariat, which has just been set up in Bujumbura.

11. The United Nations has also addressed the need to adapt its structure and methodologies to the new realities. The Peacebuilding Commission has been established to support post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in a more sustained, coherent and effective manner. The Commission is the only major body including representatives of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and embodies a new approach to strengthening coherence and coordination among the major organs of the United Nations system in support of post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction.

12. Efforts continue to be made to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which fuels armed conflicts and exacerbates organized crime and instability in Africa. In June 2006, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Associated Material was signed by heads of State and Government in Abuja, replacing the voluntary moratorium established in 1998.

13. Delivering humanitarian assistance in Africa has remained a challenge throughout the decade. Violent conflicts and severe natural disasters, including widespread refugee movements, have stretched the capacity of both United Nations and African relief agencies and forced the humanitarian community to rethink the parameters and operational structures of relief operations to better link human security, human development and humanitarian aid. New donors have become involved; public concern over humanitarian issues has intensified; and new ways of working are being tried. In 2006, the world's largest humanitarian relief operation remained in effect but fragile in the Darfur region of the Sudan, while many other challenges persist in the region.

14. Despite these positive developments, sustained peace and stability in Africa are today threatened by problems the extent of which could hardly have been imagined a decade ago. These include the increased prevalence of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS; the effects of global warming and climate change; extremely high rates of youth unemployment; human trafficking; massive displacements of people; and the emergence of terrorist networks and the increased activity of transnational organized crime. In fact, a key feature of contemporary conflict is that it substantially overlaps with crime, particularly transnational organized crime, and tends to generate high degrees of criminality in the post-conflict period. These dynamics complicate conflict prevention and reconstruction efforts. Sustaining positive trends in both conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction will continue to depend on a clear understanding of the challenges, the political will to respond to those challenges, and the resources necessary to provide adequate responses.

B. Building durable peace and promoting economic growth

15. In my 1998 report I highlighted the problems associated with the long-term distortions in Africa's political economy and the authoritarian legacies of colonialism, which helped produce highly personalized forms of governance in parts of the continent. I identified the frequent absence of peaceful means to change or replace leadership and the often violent politicization of ethnicity as some of the

major factors hampering development and preventing African peoples from fully enjoying their rights and opportunities.

16. To address these challenges, I called, among other measures, for new sources of funding and a better use of existing resources, the elimination of trade barriers to African products and the enactment of trade and debt measures to enable Africa to generate and better invest its own resources. I asked donors and trading partners to consider opening international markets and to restructure international aid as a means of allowing equal opportunities for African products and businesses.[1]

17. Since my initial report, there have been considerable improvements in the economic and political conditions that had fostered tension and strife in the past. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an Africa-owned and Africa-managed strategic development framework, was launched in 2001. NEPAD aims at eradicating poverty and at placing African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development and has become increasingly recognized as the region's blueprint for the future.

18. According to the 2006 report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs entitled "World Economic Situation and Prospects", in broad terms, Africa is moving in the direction of economic prosperity with a growth rate of 6 per cent expected in 2007, a rise from 5.6 per cent in 2006. Although Africa's recent good growth record represents a major turnaround from previous decades of economic stagnation, it is still insufficient to meet the 7 per cent growth rate required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

19. Growth in Africa is highly concentrated on a relatively narrow range of commodity exports, making many African economies extremely vulnerable to exogenous factors. In 2005, Africa received record foreign investment inflows of $31 billion, a 78 per cent increase over 2004, and the 2006 figures are expected to show an increase over 2005. However, economic growth has, in some instances, exacerbated problems of economic and social cohesion.

20. Among the recommendations outlined in my 1998 report, I encouraged African countries to enhance respect for basic human rights and the rule of law, promote transparency and accountability in public administration and create a positive environment for socio-economic progress in order to promote durable peace and sustainable development in the continent.

21. Increasingly, countries on the continent are holding democratic elections, the most recent success being the peaceful completion of the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, marking a milestone in the resolution of one of the longest and deadliest conflicts in Africa. Since 2002, the continent has held more than 50 elections, and under the Lomé Declaration of July 2000, the African Union pledged to oppose any unconstitutional change of government taking place in a member State.

22. However, the international community has come to recognize that good governance comprises much more than the holding of democratic elections. There are still compelling needs to enhance administrative capacity, to ensure the independence of the judiciary and to promote transparency and accountability at the

[1] A full examination of the progress in these areas is contained in my fifth consolidated progress report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/62/___).

national levels. To improve governance, African leaders established the African Peer Review Mechanism, a voluntary self-monitoring and assessment tool open to all members of the African Union. So far, 26 member States of the African Union have acceded to the Mechanism and 5 countries have already completed the assessment process, which entails conformity to principles, codes and standards in the basic declarations of NEPAD on democracy, political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development.

23. The last 10 years have also witnessed a gradual but profound shift in global norms with respect to the use of force and violence in inter-State relations. The rule of law has increasingly become the centrepiece of all policymaking processes. African countries are committed to respecting and promoting human rights, protecting civilians in times of conflict and upholding international law in their relations. Twenty-nine African countries are now parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and its Prosecutor has opened investigations in several African countries. The Special Court for Sierra Leone initiated proceedings against the former President of Liberia, and the African Union has made it clear that it will not tolerate grave violations of international humanitarian law.

24. Yet for all of this progress, there are still serious challenges ahead. Extreme poverty, together with lack of access to basic education, health care and adequate nutrition, continues to prevent millions of talented, promising young people in Africa from fulfilling their potential. At least 200 million people on the continent go hungry every day and agricultural production will have to be substantially increased to meet their needs. Even though civil society organizations have proved to be key partners in improving peace and development in the continent, the acute lack of capacity and funding prevents their further engagement and participation in local, national, regional and pan-African decision-making processes. Moreover, despite considerable advances, more support of women's participation and leadership in peace negotiations and post-conflict peacebuilding is needed.

II. Recent developments in addressing the causes of conflict

25. During the 2006-2007 reporting period, agencies of the United Nations system continued to implement relevant recommendations contained in my 1998 report. The United Nations system has increasingly adapted its programmes and priorities to the new African context, supporting Governments, regional and subregional organizations and civil society in facing existing and emerging challenges in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, economic development, humanitarian assistance and capacity-building. Individual agencies and the United Nations system as a whole are redefining their partnership with Africa in light of the profound transformations that the continent and its institutions have experienced over the past few years, going beyond development and crisis assistance by opening up a broader cooperation that involves issues of joint political concern and interest.

A. Conflict prevention, peacemaking and humanitarian affairs

1. Mediation and prevention

26. Third-party mediation has proved to be one of the most important means at the disposal of the United Nations to prevent and resolve deadly conflicts around the world. The Department of Political Affairs has now established the Mediation Support Unit to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to support mediation and good offices. The initiative stems from the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), which recognized the important role of my good offices, including in the mediation of disputes. In October 2006, the Unit held a seminar in Cape Town, South Africa, in partnership with the Centre for Conflict Resolution and the African Union, in which mediators were invited to reflect on their experiences and identify key aspects of mediation support. The Unit and other agencies have noted the importance of promoting inclusiveness as a key concept in resolving conflict, both substantially in the structures of government, and procedurally in peace negotiation processes. The Unit launched the United Nations Peacemaker website in October 2006, containing a database of peace agreements and a range of other tools for peacemaking professionals. Efforts are under way to establish a standby team of mediation experts who will be on call to assist in peacemaking efforts around the world.

27. The special envoys I dispatched to various countries continued to offer timely and discreet facilitation to prevent tensions from deteriorating into open conflict. For example, elections in Gambia took place peacefully in September 2006, despite an initial period of tense and polarized political discourse. Many actors in the country credited part of this success to the work of my special envoy for the Gambia, who acted as a mediator and facilitator before, during and after the elections.

2. Peace negotiations

28. In August 2006, the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) signed a cessation of hostilities agreement in Juba, southern Sudan. The United Nations, through the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provided support for the African-led mediation efforts in northern Uganda. On 1 December 2006, a special envoy for the LRA-affected areas was appointed with a comprehensive mandate to support the peace process and to build regional support for national reconciliation in northern Uganda.

29. Amid a tense and violent environment, the United Nations Political Office for Somalia continued its efforts to enhance peace and national reconciliation in the country. The Office has supported the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States and the African Union in promoting a peaceful settlement of the Somali crisis. My Special Representative has played a key role in promoting a coordinated and concerted approach among members of the international community in support of peace efforts in Somalia, including through the International Contact Group on Somalia created in 2006.

3. Humanitarian coordination

30. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to facilitate regional humanitarian coordination using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to provide overall policy and technical guidance to ad hoc working groups, United Nations country teams and other partners. The Office has undertaken situation analysis within the Mano River Union region and in Côte d'Ivoire and enhanced information sharing with United Nations country teams from the region. Its work in the Mano River region is aimed at consolidating peace and security, promoting early warning measures, addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and reinforcing environmental restoration and protection in the region. Humanitarian efforts increasingly provide the United Nations system with an early indication of potential crises.

B. Peacekeeping

1. Côte d'Ivoire

31. The United Nations continued to play a central role at the country level in harmonizing initiatives and coordinating support by the international community, in particular through its chairing of the International Working Group and through the presence of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on the ground. Efforts were made in 2006 to enhance the cooperation of various stakeholders on humanitarian issues, particularly on the protection of civilians in Côte d'Ivoire. Two high-level meetings of Ivorian and regional leaders were convened in 2006 to address outstanding issues at the core of the conflict and support peace and mediation initiatives. On 4 March 2007, the Burkinabe-facilitated dialogue between the President and the leader of the Forces nouvelles led to the signing of a new comprehensive plan elaborated by the parties themselves, the Ouagadougou Agreement, which marked a major breakthrough in the peace process.

2. Liberia

32. As part of efforts to implement the integrated mission concept, coordination between the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations country team has been led by my Special Representative as coordinator of the United Nations operations in Liberia. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster approach was introduced in Liberia in 2006 as a framework bringing together the United Nations, Government and other partners to enhance accountability, effectiveness and predictability of humanitarian responses. Although significant progress has been made towards recovery in Liberia, certain remote areas and vulnerable groups are still in urgent need of humanitarian support.

33. Following the inauguration of the new Government in January 2006, UNMIL established a task force on the rule of law which later became the Government-led "governance and rule of law" pillar of the Liberian Reconstruction and Development Committee. The Government's bilateral and multilateral partners also meet under the umbrella of the Economic Governance Steering Committee, which monitors progress in the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme. The country has made major strides towards restoring peace and stability, and during the reporting period the Security Council

lifted the ban on diamond and timber trade and has modified arms embargoes to incorporate additional exceptions.

3. Sierra Leone

34. The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) continued to monitor developments in the subregion, including the dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone over Yenga, as well as other developments within the framework of the Mano River Union. The Office is working towards building a network of mediators which will involve national security forces, local councillors, traditional rulers and civil society organizations.

35. In the area of conflict resolution, UNIOSIL was involved in mediating between the ruling party and other major political parties. It also facilitated the deliberation and signing of the political parties' code of conduct for elections and the finalization of the media code of conduct for elections, and helped the Political Parties Registration Commission to encourage constructive dialogue among political parties. As part of the post-conflict peacebuilding strategy, UNIOSIL is actively engaged in social and economic initiatives in the areas of youth employment, health and infrastructure development. UNIOSIL is assisting the Government of Sierra Leone and the assessment team from the Peacebuilding Commission in identifying priority areas to be addressed in the Sierra Leone Compact. On 1 March 2007, the Secretary-General announced that an allocation of $35 million from the Peacebuilding Fund had been made towards Sierra Leone.

4. The Sudan

36. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) continued to provide good offices and political support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including defusing tensions in the highly militarized area of Phom el-Zeraf in Upper Nile, in the Abyei area, and in Malakal following a flare-up of hostilities in November 2006. The Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement was signed in October 2006. The redeployment of the Sudan People's Liberation Army from eastern Sudan was declared complete in July 2006, and significant progress has been made in the redeployment of the Sudanese Armed Forces from southern Sudan, scheduled for completion by July 2007.

37. Technical and capacity-building support was given to the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan, with over 18,000 judges, lawyers and law enforcement and civil society members trained on issues relating to good governance and human rights. UNMIS also initiated a community policing programme, including in camps for the internally displaced, and continued to advocate for corrections reform.

38. In order to support the provision of social services by the Government of Southern Sudan, various United Nations agencies collaborated to provide offices, equipment and operating expenses in each of the 10 capitals of southern Sudan and assisted the Government in ensuring the safe return of approximately 20,000 internally displaced persons and 25,000 refugees. Mine action activities, including the clearance of over 135,000 mines and explosive remnants, facilitated the return of people to the south.

5. Darfur (Sudan)

39. The United Nations has designed two phases of support for the African Union, the light and heavy support packages. The light support package, which consists of police and military advisory personnel, material and equipment for the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), has for the most part been delivered. Since 28 December 2006, the United Nations has deployed military personnel, police advisers and civilian staff to El Fasher, Nyala and other parts of Darfur. Completion of the first phase depends on contributions from Member States to fill outstanding requirements for staff officers and armoured personnel carriers. Major challenges to the full implementation of the light support package include the lack of security and the inadequate infrastructure within Darfur and the AMIS camps.

40. The implementation of the second phase, the heavy support package, which will include a range of force enablers, three formed police units, civilian personnel and mission support, commenced on 16 April 2007 with the agreement of the Government of the Sudan to the United Nations-African Union proposals and authorization of the heavy support package by the Security Council, as outlined in my report of 23 February 2007 (S/2007/104). On 12 June 2007, the Government agreed to support unconditionally the deployment of a hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, following talks in Addis Ababa to clarify the mandate, structure, components and tasks of the force. The United Nations and the African Union have pledged to seek African troops first, and during its visit to Khartoum, the Security Council noted that it would seek funding for the operation from the United Nations peacekeeping budget.

6. Democratic Republic of the Congo

41. Following the successful presidential, National Assembly and Provincial Assembly elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the National Assembly was installed on 22 September 2006. President Joseph Kabila was inaugurated on 6 December 2006, bringing the transition process envisaged by the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement of 2002 to a formal conclusion. Significant progress has been made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, especially in the Ituri region, where 4,500 combatants will benefit from the programme. The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has continued its work in building the capacity of the Congolese national police, training over 43,000 police officers so as to ensure security during and after the national elections. Many security challenges remain, however, in the eastern part of the country.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding

42. United Nations post-conflict peacebuilding efforts to prevent relapse into armed conflict and to assist countries in the transition to development are being expanded. The recognition of the inextricable link between peace and development has opened a window for increased cooperation and coordination between different stakeholders, from Governments to United Nations agencies to civil society organizations. Issues related to human rights, governance, the rule of law, gender, children, youth and economic development are being dealt with in an increasingly holistic and comprehensive way. For peacebuilding the key challenge remains the

mobilization of sustained and adequate international support, including funding and resources as well as political commitment.

1. Strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

43. The Peacebuilding Commission became fully functional in 2006. In February 2007, the Commission agreed on the basic concept for an integrated peacebuilding strategy and its design process. The approach will provide an agreed framework to record commitments from the country under consideration, the Peacebuilding Commission and other partners, and to ensure greater coherence and coordination of efforts. During its first year of operation, the Peacebuilding Commission focused on articulating an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Burundi, which was completed in June 2007, and for Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone Compact, a framework for the Commission's engagement, will be finalized and endorsed following the country's presidential and parliamentary elections in August 2007.

44. The Department of Political Affairs, through its peacebuilding support offices in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, continued to provide the Governments of those countries with critical technical support for capacity-building of State institutions.

2. Women and peace and security

45. The United Nations peacebuilding offices in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau continued to carry out activities aimed at building capacity and increasing women's participation in peace, security and electoral processes by conducting workshops and seminars for local women and members of the Government. The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone is supporting the initiative to achieve equal representation of women in Parliament, other legislative bodies and public offices. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been closely monitoring peace initiatives in countries in conflict with a view to securing the participation and representation of refugee women in peace negotiations, as has been the case in the Sudan.

46. During the reporting period the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) played a convening and brokering role in building new partnerships and supported women's movements and organizations throughout Africa by providing capacity- and strategy-building tools. In Burundi, UNIFEM supported the participation of women from civil society in all technical groups of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers process to ensure that women's human rights issues and gender equality were fully taken into account.

47. With regard to the promotion of gender justice, UNIFEM provided technical support to the regional high-level meeting on "Partners for gender justice in conflict-affected countries" which was held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 22 and 23 March 2007. In April 2007, UNIFEM launched a programme on "Supporting women's engagement in peacebuilding and preventing sexual violence in conflict: community-led approaches" which will be implemented in Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda. In Rwanda, UNIFEM has been instrumental in helping to set up a gender-based violence desk at the Rwandan national police headquarters to respond to and prevent cases of gender violence. This is contributing to national efforts to change community attitudes on issues related to gender-based violence and women's rights.

3. Children and youth

48. In 1996, the report by Graça Machel on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/51/306) proposed comprehensive actions to be taken by the international community to improve the protection and care of children affected by armed conflict. Much progress has been made in the last 10 years, including the Optional Protocols (2000), demobilization and reintegration programmes for children and the prosecution of perpetrators by international tribunals. My Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have co-convened a strategic review of the Machel report, the results of which will be submitted to the General Assembly in October 2007.

49. During 2006, UNICEF supported the implementation of a mechanism to collect reliable information on the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan. The objective of the tool is to integrate the needs of post-conflict youth into national development plans. In April 2007, UNICEF launched a youth survey on the impact of armed conflict on children on its website, the Voices of Youth, to enable the voices of children and young people to be considered in the strategic review of the Machel report.

50. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa convened an expert group meeting on "Youth in Africa: participation of youth as partners in peace and development in post-conflict countries" in Namibia in November 2006 to analyse the complexity and the challenges facing youth in post-conflict situations in Africa. The meeting proposed strategies and mechanisms for including youth as central stakeholders and key actors in rehabilitation, reconciliation, rebuilding of war-torn communities and contributing to sustainable development in their countries. The expert group meeting was organized in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

51. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, a capacity-building workshop on youth development in Africa in June 2006. The workshop aimed at sharing the knowledge and skills of experts with youth from various non-governmental organizations. The workshop helped to develop policies and programmes for the inclusion of youth in decision-making and for addressing major youth development challenges relating to employment, education and health, including HIV/AIDS.

4. Rule of law

52. Following the recommendations of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, a rule of law coordination and resource group was created on 24 November 2006, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, to help ensure policy coherence across the entire United Nations system. For countries emerging from conflict situations, the task of building confidence in legal and judicial systems is crucial for creating the conditions for sustainable peace and development.

53. United Nations field presences have increasingly been given rule of law mandates to help build the capacity of national institutions. There are six missions with rule of law components presently operating in Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan). The missions provide Governments with legislative assistance and support for the establishment of court infrastructure or the strengthening of police institutions and

prison systems. In Liberia, UNMIL supported national counterparts in developing a judicial reform strategy and assisted in re-establishing courts throughout the country. The mission's work has been instrumental in supporting the drafting of a law criminalizing rape and of a law providing for the budgetary autonomy of the justice system.

54. UNOCI advised national authorities on the legal framework for national identification, and supported and monitored the registration process in anticipation of elections. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUC provided training to legal professionals and assisted the Government in reforming the military justice system in line with international standards. MONUC also advised national authorities in the development of victim/witness support systems.

5. Small arms and light weapons

55. Though the illicit trade in small arms continues to fuel violent conflicts and destabilize entire regions, concrete steps are being taken to prevent, combat and eradicate this deadly traffic. In June 2006, ECOWAS transformed its moratorium on small arms into the binding Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Associated Material. UNDP has supported ECOWAS in the implementation of the Convention through the multipartner ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme and is also working with the ECOWAS Commission on preparing a regional conference on small arms and light weapons.

56. The Office for Disarmament Affairs assisted the Economic Community of Central African States, in preparing a legally binding instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa and is also elaborating a code of conduct for security and defence forces in the subregion. In 2006, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa launched the African Security Sector Reform Programme to promote peace and reinforce State stability through the establishment of a code of ethics that would regulate the behaviour of armed and security forces towards civilians.

6. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

57. The effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants remains a priority in securing the success of long-term peacebuilding initiatives. In December 2006, the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards, jointly developed by 15 United Nations entities, were launched. The standards are a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and procedures covering 24 areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration that establish a United Nations integrated approach to the planning, management and implementation of the relevant processes.

58. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized the Second International Conference on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and Stability in Africa, which was held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in June 2007. The Conference identified four major areas of focus for practitioners and policymakers: the linkage between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform; transitional justice; children and women associated with armed forces; and armed groups and combatants on foreign soil. Practitioners offered concrete recommendations for effective policy formulation and operational strategies for programme improvement. The Conference brought together

practitioners from 23 African countries and provided an opportunity for them to share experiences.

7. HIV/AIDS

59. The risk of HIV spreading is particularly high in post-conflict situations, when the freedom of movement increases, different communities interact and armed forces demobilize. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has contributed to addressing HIV issues in post-conflict needs assessment missions, including in Somalia and the Sudan.

60. A specific AIDS module has been developed as part of the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards (see para. 57 above). Inter-agency missions have been undertaken to test the module in the Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire. During the reporting period UNAIDS continued to support the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and national security agencies in their AIDS programming. The Department is actively pursuing its ongoing review of its peacekeeping AIDS policy, while all missions continue to have AIDS policy advisers or focal points.

8. Human rights

61. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been supporting Governments and non-governmental organizations throughout the continent through the human rights units of peacekeeping operations as well as through technical assistance programmes at the national and regional levels. The Office has provided support to key stakeholders involved in the Juba peace negotiations and prepared qualitative studies on accountability and reconciliation in northern Uganda. A human rights monitoring network has now been established in some conflict-affected areas of Uganda, strengthening national and local capacity to monitor and respond to conflict-related human rights violations.

62. In the Sudan, the UNMIS human rights component has assisted the National Assembly in amending sections of the Criminal Act and the Evidence Act. In Sierra Leone, the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission in December 2006 paved the way for the formulation of a National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The act empowers the National Human Rights Commission to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to review legislation to ensure that human rights are adequately protected. In Burundi, the criminal code was revised to abolish the death penalty.

63. On 2 May 2007, the International Criminal Court issued warrants of arrest for crimes against humanity and war crimes against the former Minister of State for the Interior of the Government of the Sudan, the Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs and the leader of the Janjaweed militia. On 22 May 2007 the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced the decision to open an investigation in the Central African Republic after the Government had referred the situation to the Office of the Prosecutor on 22 December 2004. A breakthrough occurred on 4 June 2007 when the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor began in The Hague, with the Government of the Netherlands and the International Criminal Court facilitating the conduct of the trial by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

9. Risks to refugee security

64. By the end of 2006, Africa had some 2.4 million refugees and 6.8 million internally displaced persons. UNHCR continued to protect and assist them, despite difficulties arising from financial, logistical and operational constraints. In September 2006, UNHCR disseminated operational guidelines on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum to field locations.

65. The consolidation of peace in several African countries allowed UNHCR to make significant progress in its search for durable solutions for a number of protracted displacement situations, especially in the case of refugees from Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and southern Sudan and for internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Liberia. The establishment of the joint plan for returnees between the Government of the Sudan and UNMIS has facilitated the safe and voluntary return of 20,000 internally displaced persons between the north and the south of the country.

66. Key political developments including the successful completion of elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the peace talks initiated between the Government of Uganda and LRA and the ceasefire agreement in Burundi between the Forces nationales de libération and the Government encouraged the return of thousands of displaced people. Overall, around 256,000 Burundians have returned home since the beginning of repatriation operations in 2002, some 45,000 of them during the past year. The reconciliation process in Togo also improved prospects for the repatriation of refugees, many of whom returned spontaneously in 2006.

67. However, in some parts of the continent instability worsened, leading to more displacement, particularly in the Central African Republic, Chad, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. With over half a million refugees and internally displaced persons, the Darfur region of the Sudan continued to pose one of the biggest challenges for the United Nations system. In 2006, UNHCR actively engaged the Government of Chad to try to locate refugee camps farther from the Sudanese border, where military activity had been reported. The Office also supported the implementation of a memorandum of understanding on security to increase the capacity of the Chadian forces to provide security in and around refugee settlements.

D. Capacity-building in Africa

68. Over the last 10 years, capacity-building efforts and cooperation between the United Nations and African regional organizations have grown in depth and breadth. This process culminated in the signature of the declaration on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in November 2006 in Addis Ababa. In building on previous agreements, the declaration provides a holistic structure for United Nations system-wide support for regional and subregional capacity-building efforts in a number of areas including peace, security and crime prevention; institution-building, political and electoral matters; governance, human rights and the rule of law; peacebuilding; humanitarian response, recovery and food security; social, cultural and health issues; and the environment. Moreover, the United Nations is preparing a 10-year capacity-building programme in support of the African Union in accordance with the recommendations of the 2005 Summit Outcome.

69. During the reporting period, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and others collaborated with and supported capacity-building of the African Union in a variety of ways including by providing training and promoting staff exchanges, establishing dedicated support capacities and providing technical and financial assistance to build institutional capacity and expedite institutional transformation.

70. Under a multipartner project valued at $10 million, the African Union has received technical and financial support from UNDP since 2006 to support conflict prevention, security and peacebuilding capacities. UNDP has also helped to strengthen the operational capacities of the African Union Peace and Security Council and its related institutions such as the Panel of the Wise, the African standby force and the continent-wide early warning system. UNDP-funded experts are providing technical backstopping for African Union peace negotiations in Darfur, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Sudan, Somalia, the Comoros, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 2006, UNDP initiated a $2 million preparatory assistance project for institutional transformation of the African Union Commission.

71. Recognizing the need to enhance the African Union's peacekeeping capacity, the General Assembly approved the creation of a dedicated interdisciplinary capacity to implement a comprehensive support programme for African peacekeeping capacity. Consequently, a multidisciplinary African Union Peace Operations Support Team was established at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, with a smaller component in New York, as part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operation's joint action plan. The team will assist the African Union in developing institutional capacity to manage complex multidimensional peacekeeping operations including the development of the African standby force operational capability. The team will also serve as the coordination point for all cooperation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the African Union.

III. Concrete proposals for possible United Nations actions and plans in support of the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010

72. In its resolution 61/230, the General Assembly requested that I include in the present report a number of concrete proposals for possible United Nations actions and plans in support of the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010. Accordingly, I requested the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to consult widely with relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes as well as the African Union to produce a preliminary set of proposals for consideration by Member States.

73. It should be noted that my core proposals recognize that the primary responsibility for a conflict-free Africa rests with Africa at the national, regional and continental levels. Accordingly, United Nations actions and plans should be focused primarily on providing effective support for Africa's own efforts, plans and programmes as articulated in both the African Union policy framework on post-

conflict reconstruction and development[2] and the multi-stakeholder integrated peacebuilding strategic frameworks emerging under the aegis of the Peacebuilding Commission.

74. The entities of the United Nations system offered a range of proposals in response to the General Assembly's request, reflecting their varied mandates and experiences. Despite the enormous efforts undertaken by African and international partners and the commendable progress in bringing about greater stability on the continent, most agencies noted the tremendous challenges that lie ahead before a conflict-free Africa can become a lasting reality. While some of the recommendations contained in my 1998 report remain relevant, given the progress made in the continent and the emergence of challenges which could not be foreseen a decade ago, an updated long-term strategic plan will be necessary to achieve that goal. In the shorter term, United Nations agencies proposed the following measures:

(a) To deepen the engagement of the United Nations system in support of the African Union in accordance with the call in the World Summit Outcome for a 10-year capacity-building programme in support of the African Union;

(b) To fully exploit the strength of the United Nations in normative action to advance negotiations leading to a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms;

(c) To establish a coordinated strategy for involving the United Nations system in the positioning of employment and income generation at the centre of early recovery and transition operations, including in the restoration of infrastructure, which would have a multiplier effect on recovery prospects;

(d) To build up the capacity of African institutions to strengthen regional cooperation and integration so as to increase confidence and promote economic relations that benefit all countries, including better control of the exploitation of and trade in natural resources;

(e) To develop and implement an effective strategy for engaging and strengthening civil society in post-conflict countries utilizing, inter alia, broad-scale programmes in the culture of peace and civic education including basic budgetary knowledge to enable better monitoring of government institutions;

(f) To facilitate short-term assignments of United Nations personnel in administrative, managerial, public information, economic and social development fields to build the capacity of African regional and subregional organizations.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

75. The last 10 years have witnessed many positive developments in Africa. The number of armed conflicts has been significantly reduced; the African Union has been established with a broader and more active mandate than the Organization of African Unity it replaced; development partners have increased their strategic, economic and political engagement with the continent; the United Nations has

[2] See African Union document EX.CL/274 (IX) and decision EX.CL/Dec.302 (IX) adopted at the

established a Peacebuilding Commission, a Human Rights Council and other bodies to fill some gaps in post-conflict situations; NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism have been established as a commitment of African countries themselves; African countries have begun to establish national early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms; and non-governmental organizations and the public have increasingly played a significant role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacemaking in the continent.

76. In the last decade, the number of development partners involved in peace and development efforts in Africa has increased. No one will today deny the important role of civil society and grass-roots organizations in preventing violent conflict and dealing with the scars of war. Few would envisage a sound, long-term economic recovery process without the involvement of the private sector, and the important role of the media in fostering peace and understanding is also widely recognized.

77. However, the readiness of African countries and institutions to resolve their own peace, security and development challenges should not prevent the international community from providing the necessary support to these efforts. Indeed, more action is needed both to strengthen and support Africa's own efforts to bring peace to the continent and to tackle the wider global sources of armed conflict. African institutions are working hard to develop their capacity to anticipate, prevent and respond to crises, but sustained attention and investment from the United Nations and the international community at large will be necessary in support of such efforts, bearing in mind that the Security Council still bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

78. In 1998 I endeavoured to identify the causes of conflict and to recommend means of promoting durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. It is time to undertake a systematic, comprehensive and joint review of the commitments made, action taken, progress achieved and lessons learned in preventing conflict and promoting peace and development in Africa. The review would consider the continued relevance of the 1998 recommendations and the array of mandates and resolutions on Africa, and whether it would be useful to have more systematic arrangements for coordinating action, monitoring progress and sharing lessons learned. None of this should, of course, imply a pause in implementing existing commitments or undertaking new commitments where these are appropriate.

79. Appropriate and adequate institutional arrangements within the United Nations will hold the key to the success of our efforts in support of Africa. I intend to revamp these efforts by establishing greater institutional coherence among the main Secretariat entities dealing with issues that concern Africa, as well as establishing stronger system-wide organizational arrangements to ensure full implementation of activities in favour of Africa. As part of this approach I will seek to formulate strategic actions for the United Nations and the international community in support of achieving sustainable development in a conflict-free Africa.